EIGHT SERMONS PREACHED ON SEVERAL Occasions,

By

JOHN COCKBURN, D. D.

I have Preached Righteousness in the Congregation: Lo, I have not refrained my lips, O LORD, Thou knowest. Psal. 40. 9.

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TO

The MUCH HONOURED

SIR ROBERT COULT

DEAN:

And the other WORTHY

GENTLEMEN

Of the Honourable Faculty of

Advocates.

RIGHT HONOURABLE,

SO soon as I was determin'd to make this publick Appearance, I resolved to embrace the occasion of Testifying the Respects due to your *Honourable Faculty*, in which there are so many Persons who deserve well of all the Nation; as also,

I thought my ſelf bound in Gratitude, to make a publick acknowledgement of the Obligation my Brethren, and I ly under at this time: For intereſſing your ſelves ſo much in us, and beſtowing ſuch marks of Favour upon us. Your Approbation and Eſteem is an Advantage to any *Party*, and add Honour to it: For though your *Office* be only to Plead, yet all muſt acknowledge, that you are able *Judges of Truth*, *Learning*, and *Good ſenſe*; and therefore that *Party* muſt have a good ſhare of theſe whom the Beſt and moſt Judicious *Lawyers* declare for.

From your *Faculty* have ſprung many Illuſtrious Ornaments of the Nation, not only for Law and Eloquence, which are proper to your Profeſſion, but for all other Learning and Enduements. To paſs over thoſe who lived in former Times, as *Skeen*, *Craig*, *Dury*, *Hope*, *Nicolſon*; And the Honourable Sir *Robert Spotſwood*, who is never to be forgotten, for his excellent Parts, great Virtue, and a moſt exemplary Loyalty, which could not be ſhaken by Death. This is evident from Inſtances in our

own

own Time: And not to ſpeak of the Living, which may beget envy. Sir *George Lockheart* was a Learned *Oracle of Law* and *Juſtice*, more worthy to be Conſulted than that of *Delphos*. Sir *John Cunninghame* was not only an eminent *Lawyer*, but was alſo every way endued as a *Divine* and *Hiſtorian*, which made him a ſtedfaſt Friend to the *Church*, as he was a conſtant Patern of Gravity and Piety. It would be preſumption in me to ſpeak of Sir *John Nisbet* his Skill in *Law*, whom the beſt *Lawyers* were not aſham'd to Conſult: But he was not better acquainted with the *Law*, than he was with all the Fathers of the Church; And alſo all the *Greek* and *Latine Authors*, both *Poets* and *Hiſtorians*: He was a judicious *Critick*, a neat and true *Roman Poet*, and wrot the *Latine* elegantly; As his Parts were great and ſingular, ſo his Loyalty was firm and ſtedfaſt, he choſed to leave the Kingdom rather than to act contrary to the Duty and Allegiance he owed to his lawful Soveraign; nor was he tempted by what he met with afterwards, to plot againſt the Government; My Lord *Dirletown* brings to my remembrance

rance another worthy Perſon, *viz. Burnet* of *Crimond*; for he thought him ſo worthy a Subject, that he was at the pains to draw up his Character in pure *Latine*, which I have ſeen, and whereby it appears, that he was no ill *Barriſter*, a Wiſe and Juſt *Judge*, a moſt Loyal and Faithful *Subject*, a good *Patriot*, and a true *Chriſtian*. If I would make mention of every one particularly, I ſhould go beyond the bounds of an Epiſtle. But I muſt not forget the Honourable Sir *George Mackenzie*, who had all the accompliſhments of a *Gentleman*, a *Scholar*, a *Lawyer* and a *Stats Man*; and who Departed this Life with the Faith, Patience, and Pietie of a *Chriſtian*; Not only your *Faculty*, but the Nation ſuſtain a loſs in his death, as they have done in ſome *Others* of late; And I heartily wiſh for the Repairing of *theſe Loſſes*, that your *Faculty* may ever Flouriſh with *Learned*, *Knowing*, *Eloquent*, and *Publick Spirited Perſons*.

It may be thought great Preſumption to offer the following Papers to ſuch judicious *Criticks*, who are acquainted with the Learned

ed and Eloquent Treatiſes written in every Language: But where is greateſt Judgement there uſeth to be moſt Diſcretion, which giveth me Confidence and Ground to Hope that what I offer with Reſpect and Good will, ſhall find acceptance, thô it cannot be pleaded ſo much for it ſelf. I know you have more Underſtanding than to expect the Embelliſhments of profound *Learning* and artificial *Rhetorick* in Diſcourſes, which are intended mainly for inſtructing the more vulgar ſort in what concerns their *Peace* and *Eternal Salvation.* The *Truth* and *Myſteries* of our *Holy Religion* are propoſed to the Belief and Conſideration of all ſorts of People, and therefore I need not tell you; All that is requiſite in *Sermons*, is to treate theſe things in ſuch a manner, and to ſet them in ſuch a proper Light as that their Beauty and Excellency may be underſtood, both by the Learned and the Unlearned. There is nothing in our *Religion* which may not be made plaine to the meaneſt Capacity; And yet the whole of it is ſo Auguſt and Venerable, as to deſerve

Atten-

Attention and Respect from the Wisest; Wherefore seeing our Auditories are made up of a mixt Multitude, the very Art of *Preaching* is to endeavour the gaining of both; And neither to Nauseate and Offend the better and more Judicious, by uttering mean, sordid, and contemptible things: Nor yet to amuse and frustrate weaker Capacities, by the proposal of any thing above their reach. How I have acquite my self herein, I leave it to others to judge: But if your Approbation be given, the Censures of others need neither be feared nor regarded. Who is patronized by the *Masters of Law*, *Witt*, and *Learning*, may be very secure.

But my Concernment is not for my self but for the Truths I teach, which are *worthy of all acceptation*. They are both necessary and seasonable, and because they are such, I would have them propagated & seriously considered. For which cause, as I have put my self under your Patronage and Protection, so I desire to engage the same for them; Knowing that your example will have great influence upon the whole Body of the *Nation*. What you own

and

and recommend, all will have an esteem for. I shall not trouble you with Arguments to perswade you to this. for that were to reflect on those whom I designe to Honour. It would beget a suspition of your Sense and understanding, to offer to shew what Honour and Advantage redound to the becoming *Advocates* for *GOD* and *Religion*, to the pleading by Word and Practice for Vertue and Piety. The pleading other Causes may bring in more Temporal gain; But certainly this gives greater present Satisfaction to the mind, as it is the only way to secure *Eternal Life*.

That I may shun the being tedious, I will take my leave with a hearty Wish and Prayer, that there may be alwayes a good Understanding and Agreement betwixt the Bar and the Pulpit, that you may be successfull in all your Vertuous Undertakings, and that *Religion* and Vertue may alwayes adorne your other Qualifications.

I AM,
Right Honourable,
Your sincere Well-wisher, and humble Servant.
J. COCKBURN.

THE PREFACE

I *Do not publiſh the following* Sermons *from any ſingular Opinion I have of them, as if they were* extraordinary: *Nor am I ſo fond of my own* Productions, *as to expect they ſhould be entertain'd alike with the* fine Diſcourſes *of this Nature, which are abroad the World. I freely acknowledge, that they come far ſhort of Theſe, and ſo deſerve leſs, except it be for the ſubject matter of them which are* Divine Truths *of the* greateſt Importance; *upon which account, I deny not but that they ought to find Acceptance amongſt Men.*

I have been mov'd to this undertaking by the deſire of doing Good: *And the Obligations I ly under from* my Holy Calling, *to contribute all I can, to the promoting of* Truth *and* Godlineſs *in the World, which I think my ſelf more particularly bound to do this way, at this time, while I am reſtrained from the* publick Exerciſe *of my* Miniſtry. *I ſay not this either to magnifie my ſelf, or to upbraid others: But only to repreſent* Modeſtly, *why I have been enclin'd, and why I have ſuffered my ſelf to appear in* Print *at this* Time. *The preſent condition of many* Pariſhes, *has alſo made me ſomewhat forward to*

this

this: For a great many Pariſhes are not only altogether deſtitute of ſettled Paſtors; but alſo they have not the occaſion of hearing a Sermon, either from one or other; ſo that till they be provided of one who may preach to the Ear, it ſeems a Work of Charity to give them now a Sermon to the Eye. And as there is at preſent no other way of inſtructing them, ſo leſt they either loſe the Senſe of what they formerly Learned, or forget the uſe and neceſſity of Sermons by a little deſuetude, or come to have their deſires after them extinguiſhed; it will be found ſomewhat more than expedient to accuſtome People to them, and to entice them by the Reading and Meditating on ſome new Treatiſe, to build themſelves up on our moſt Holy Faith, to keep themſelves in the Love and Fear of GOD; and finally to perſwade them to a due Obedience to His Righteous and Reaſonable Commands.

I know that Sermons are not the things which reliſh beſt with the moſt, and that Eſſayes upon other Subiects would have done more to recommend one: But I ſtudied not ſo much what was grateful, As what was uſeful, and what was moſt becoming the Character of a Miniſter of JESUS CHRIST. Nor did I think it reaſonable to forbear, becauſe there are moſt exact and elaborate Works of this Nature already Publiſhed: For if one ſhould give over his undertaking, becauſe another has laboured better that way before him, the half of the world might have ſat idle, and learning would not have made that pregreſs which it has done. The Fineſt Works

deſerve

deserve the Greatest Praise, but yet what comes short of them may also be found useful. It is impossible to please all, or to shun the censures of some: But where there is Hope of doing good, the Censures of Peevish and Envious Persons ought to be no Discouragement. The doing good to one Soul will abundantly recompence My Labour, and will give such Satisfaction to my Mind, as that it shall not be discomposed at the Reflections which pass either upon my self, or my Undertakings.

In ranging of these Sermons, I observed no Order nor Method, nor had any particular end before me: But took them as they lay neareſt my Hand, or were in greateſt readineſs for the Preſs. I thought not of ſifting ſo ſoon, elſe I might perhaps have left out ſome of theſe and have put in others. For I intended to have Publiſhed ſo many more as might have given People a Fuller and more Univerſal View of Religion, and which might have ſerved either to prevent or to rectifie the many Sad and Woful Miſtakes thereof, which are Pernicious to Private Perſons, and Prejudicial to the Publick. I have not given theſe Diſcourſes another Dreſs, than what they had, when they were firſt delivered, ſome of them has ſcarſe ſuffered the change of a Word; Becauſe I was deſirous to let the World ſee rather what we uſed to Preach, than what we are able to Write: And as I here offer nothing, but what I my ſelf actually taught; So this Doctrine and theſe Inſtructions are the very ſame which were alwayes, and every where Preſſed by my Brethren, as we do appeal to the Con-

Consciences of all that heard us, *and if it be so let the World judge, whither we Preached* true Gospel, *and whither there was just reason to Complaine that the People* wanted the Gospel. *We did not deprive the People of the* Scripture, *with the* Church of Rome, *they were in every Bodies Hands; We press'd the Reading of them, and agreably to the necessary Custome both of the* Jewish *and* Christian Church, *we caus'd Read them Publickly for a sure and certain* Standard of Doctrine *and* Manners, *that the People themselves might see and hear whither these things we told them were true or not: We did not vex People with things they were not concerned in, but urg'd upon them* Faith *and* Repentance, Love *and* Obedience, Heavenly-mindedness, *and a* Contempt of the World, *that they might be useful Members of the* Church *here, and capable of* Eternal Life *hereafter. We perswaded them to mind* these things *to be* quiet and to do their own business, *and to leave the Regulating of the* State *and the Modeling of the* Church *to such as were Particularly called thereto. We know no other* Gospel *taught by* Christ *and his* Apostles, *and therefore if any teach not this* Gospel, *we think he ought not to be received; & who say that we taught it not, must not be offended if I say the Truth is not in them. The Truth of this is of more moment than to be easily parted with, it not only concerns our Reputation, and the Credit of our* Ministry, *but also the Salvation & necessary Edification of Peoples Souls are interessed therein. But I will not*

engage

engage my self at this time farther upon his head. I this
heartily Pray GOD to remove those Delusions which
possess Men, and to give the several Parties of Chri-
stians grace, to lay aside their unreasonable prejudices
and unruly Passions, that they may receive the Truth
as it is in JESUS CHRIST, and instead of bit-
ing and devouring one another, to the consuming of one
another, they may have their Conversation as becometh
the Gospel of CHRIST, & stand fast in one Spirit
with one mind, striving together for the Faith of the
Gospel.

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The FIRST SERMON

HOSEA, 10. *Chap.* 12. *verſ.*

Sow to your ſelves in Righteouſneſs, reap in Mercy: break up your fallow ground: for it is time to ſeek the LORD, *till he come and rain Righteouſneſs upon you.*

THESE words contain a Sound and wholeſome Advice to a miſerable People, lying under the weight of GOD's Anger, and threatned with many ſad and grievous Judgements. The People were *Iſrael*, the Children of the Ten *Tribes*, with whom GOD had a Controverſie, becauſe there was no Truth, nor Mercy, nor Knowledge of GOD in the Land: They had caſt off the Service of the True GOD, and corrupted themſelves with the Idolatry, Superſtition, and other Abominations of the Heathen Nations among whom they dwelt: For which Gods Wrath was kindled againſt them, and this Prophet was ſent forth to intimate the Divine Diſpleaſure, and how ſeverely it

would fall on them. But the Divine Threatnings are for the most part like *Jonathan's* Arrows, shot for Warning rather than Destruction: *In the midst of Wrath he remembers Mercy*, and when he denounceth War, he intends to spare, and therefore denounceth it that Men may be awakned to their Duty, and so prevent (if not the the Temporal Evils which they deserve) yet their Eternal Ruine, which is worst of all. Wherefore it is that the Prophet so often intermixeth his Threatnings with exhortations to Repentance, Obedience, and seeking the LORD as here in our Text.

This Advice has no particularity in it to restrict it to these to whom it was here given; but it may very well suite with any other People, who are desirous of GOD's Favour, and have reason to fear his Displeasure: Nay, here is laid down the general and indispensable Conditions on which any People may expect Peace, and Reconciliation with GOD, and the sure means of obtaining good things from Him, and so they are proper to be considered by you at this time.

Hosea speaks here in Metaphorical terms borrowed from Husbandry, which is very usual in Scripture, and in which there is a great deal both of Grace and Force, to carry the thing recommended more home

harms and to render it more effectual. St. Paul calls Believers *GODS Husbandry or Tillage.* 1 Corin. 3. 9. And here we have proper Directions, how to manage it with Skill and Profit. Plowing, Sowing, and Reaping, are main parts of Husbandry, and should be well looked to by all that would thrive at the Trade; he that neglects them, or is ignorant how to go about them, will certainly come both to Poverty and Shame. They are as essential in the Spiritual Husbandry, as the Natural, and therefore should be well studied by all, who wish well to themselves. I pray GOD we may learn and practise the Lessons here laid before us, and we shall become both perfect and happy thereby.

The Prophet begins with Sowing, tho it be not the first part of Husbandry, something must go before it; however, we will not change the Prophets words, but take them as they ly, it being no great matter what be first or last taught, providing all be carefully heard and observed. Sowing then in a Moral sense, signifies Action, whether internal of the Mind, or outward of the Body; for as Sowing is alwayes followed with some Crop, the Grain thrown by the Husband-man's Hand, tho it be covered with Earth doth not perish, it riseth again, and produceth an answerable

Harveſt: So Mens Thoughts, Words, and Actions, do not evaniſh as ſoon as they paſs from them, they remain as the Seed doth, and will ſpring up again either to their Shame and Confuſion, or Comfort and Glory. It therefore concerns us very neatly to look well to all we Think, Do, and Say: A good Husband-man will not Sow at random any thing that comes neareſt him, but will conſider what is the beſt time, and will chooſe out the beſt Seed: So a wiſe Man will not Live at random, ſpeak and do whatever is ſuggeſted to him, or comes in his Head, but ſtudieth the fitteſt times and ſeaſon of things, and he taketh care to give every time and ſeaſon what is ſuitable thereto. As Cockle and Dornel is never to be ſown, ſo Sin ought not to be done at anytime nor upon any account, *Whether we eat or drink or what ever we do ſhould be to the Glory of GOD*, and therfore the Prophet here bids us *Sow in Righteouſneſs, or Righteouſneſs it ſelf*, for we cannot carry on the Glory of GOD, or ſincerely intend it any other way: GOD can and doth turn the Wickedneſs of Men to His Glory, but when He doth ſo, He is not beholden to us for it, and therefore the only way we ought to ſeek His Glory, is, To adhere cloſely to Righteouſneſs.

When the Prophet ſaith, *Sow Righteouſneſs*

neſs or in Righteouſneſs, (which is all one, for ſome make it T O, others leave out the *Hebrew* Particle as *Redundant*) He holds forth the quality of the Seed or Grain we ſhould Sow. And by Righteouſneſs, here is not meant the vertue of Juſtice and Honeſty in our dealings with Man, it is taken in a larger ſenſe of equal extent with Holineſs, which includes all Acts of Piety and Devotion towards GOD, of Juſtice, Charity and Kindneſs towards Men, and what is good and comely for our ſelves: St. *Paul's* Injunction to the *Philippians* 4. 8. Is a good Paraphraſe on Sowing in Righteouſneſs; *Whatſoever things are True, whatſoever things are Honeſt, whatſoever things are Juſt, whatſoever things are Pure, whatſoever things are Lovely, whatſoever things are of good Report, if there be any Virtue, or any Praiſe, think on theſe things.* What things are ſo, muſt be learned from the Scriptures, the Word of GOD is the Rule of Righteouſneſs, it is the very good and precious Seed which we ought to ſow, and to ſow in Righteouſneſs is nothing elſe, but to live and do according to the Word of GOD, to practiſe what it Teacheth: *Qui mandata verberis in opera ſeminat in juſtitia.* Jerom. *Whoſoever expreſſeth in his actions the Commands of GOD, ſoweth in Righteouſneſs.* And as we muſt thus look to the Quality of what we ſow, that

that it be Righteousness, Things agreeable to the Righteous Word of GOD; so we ought to take heed to the Quantity, that we do not sow sparingly, but plentifully. This some will have to be the only meaning of the Words, but there is more reason to refer the Expression to the Quality, as we have done: However, this must be taken in too, for he doth not sow in Righteousness sincerely and with delight, that doth not abound therein. His Heart is not right, who serveth GOD by halves, who doth only some few good things: But he is a truely Righteous Man, who sets himself and gives all diligence to abound in the Work of the LORD.

And we have all reason to do so, for it is our Interest and Advantage. Men use to ply well what redounds to their particular profit, what they think will certainly benefit them; and truely we are sure of this, it will fall particularly to our share. It is remarkable, that the Prophet calls the *Sowing Righteousness, a Sowing to or for our selves*, as if nothing else could be reckoned so. And indeed Men may be frustrated of all their other Labours, but they can never be disappointed of this. In the things of this World, one may Sow and another may Reap; what one Builds and Plants, another often takes Possession of. Most

Most Men Labour for others. If the most busied would cast up his accounts, he should find but a very small part of his Travel and Projects to redound to himself. It is not only the meanest sort of People that are to be esteemed Drudges to others; but Men of all ranks from the highest, are truly Servants of a different kind: And the more Faithful and Diligent any one is in his Station or Imployment, he becomes thereby only the more useful Servant to the rest of Mankind. He only truly lives to himself, who makes it his business to be found Upright before GOD, and to do that which is Right in His sight. He that neglects this, quite neglects himself, and carries away no Profit of all his Labour under the Sun. What can the Wisest, the most Industrious, and most Fortunate Worlding boast of? at the best but a poor Transitory Enjoyment of perishing things. In that Night his Soul is taken from him, what reckoning can he make of his Barns, Goods and Store? whose are all these things? not his to be sure, and perhaps they fall into the Hands of one who has little kindness for him, or his Memory. *When he dieth*, saith the Psalmist, *he shall carry nothing away; his Glory shall not descend after him.* And then to how little purpose has he endeavoured to be made Rich,

and

and to get the Glory of his House increased. But he that is stedfast and immoveable, and alwayes abounding in the Work of the LORD, his Labour shall not be in vain, the gain shall redound to himself. What one doth in this, is, *extra Fortunam*, not lyable to any hazard, runs not the fate of other things, a Man is sure of it. Sow Righteousness and ye shall sow to your selves, none shall come betwixt you and the Blessed Fruits which is produced by that sowing. Wherefore it is here added, and *reap in mercy*.

Because the *Verb* here is in the *imperative Moode*, some will have this a Command, for a farther Progress in doing that good we have explained to be contained under the first head: but this cannot be admitted, for besides the Tautology, we must put a strain'd and unusual sense upon *reaping*. Wherefore certainly in this phrase is set forth the gracious reward wherewith *God* will bless *sowing* in righteousness; *Reaping* follows *Sowing*, and is the natural effect thereof, so, who sows in Righteousness, shall Reap in Mercy, thô what they thus Reap be neither the necessary Natural Effect of what they sow, nor yet the just Desert thereof; if they merited what they Reap, it would not be called Mercy: But it is so called, that they may not think what

what is given them to be their due. If Men would conſider themſelves, and their actions impartially, and lay aſide all proud thoughts, they would adjudge their merits to be ſmall; and that little belonged to them on that account. However all who ply ſowing in righteouſneſs ſincerely, may look for mercy, as the Husband man doth for a crop after he hath ſown; nay they may aſſure themſelves of it, which he cannot do, they may claim it as their priviledge by virtue of the *Divine promiſe* which can never fail. With reſpect to which Promiſe, and the undoubted certainty thereof, the Prophet bids them here Reap mercy: *Reap* is Imperative to denote the certainty of the thing, as if there were no more requiſite, then to put forth the Hand and take it, in which ſenſe the Imperative is uſually taken in Scripture, as *Ezek.* 18. 32. They have not the promiſe, nor are they capable of Mercy who ſow not in Righteouſneſs. *Indignation, & wrath, tribulation, and anguiſh, ſhall be upon every Soul of Man that doth evil.* Rom. 2. 9. As therefore Sowing muſt go before Reaping, ſo Sowing in Righteouſneſs muſt be previous to the Reaping in Mercy; this is neceſſary, not that we may merit, but that we may be fit objects of Mercy. And as naturally the Crop exceeds the meaſure

of

of the Grain which was ſown; ſo the gifts and expreſſions of GOD's Mercy towards righteous Perſons, ſhall infinitely exceed the works done by them. Wherefore a *Jewiſh* Doctor hath not ill expreſt it, *Sow &c. Do that which is good in mine eyes, and the good Reward which ye ſhall receive of me, ſhall be far greater than your good Works, as he that ſoweth a Buſhell, hopes to reap two or more, and therefore in the Command for ſowing, he uſeth the word Juſtice, but in the promiſe of Reaping the word* Cheſed *Mercy or Benignity, which is more than Juſtice, or what in ſtrict Juſtice can be required.* The mercy which they who ſow in righteouſneſs ſhall reap, is like GOD himſelf the Author thereof, *infinite*, and ſo cannot be expreſt: we cannot hold out all the wayes whereby GOD will ſhew his mercy to ſuch perſons. It is written, *Eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, neither have entred into the heart of Man the things which GOD hath prepared for them that love him;* 1 *Corinth.* 2. 9. As long before the harveſt the Huſbandman is refreſhed with the ſight and ſavour of his Field, ſo GOD comforteth and refreſheth the Souls of the Righteous even in this World, and hereafter he crowns them with unſpeakable glory, and bleſſeth them with eternal life. The light of GODs Countenance even in this life, where its beams are often intercepted, do

yet

yet afford more joy than in the time of Harvest, when Corn, and Wine, and Oyl abound with Men: And what will it do in the other World, where it shines fully and clearly, and without interruption, and where there is nothing to obstruct the power and efficacy thereof: Lord! What joy is there in the very prospect of this Harvest? how happy and blessed are they who are sure of it? What a kindness is it, that we have liberty to throw in our poor stock into such a profitable Bank? and a priviledge to sow, where we may reap so much? With what Face can any refuse the occasion? or what excuse is sufficient? have Men by their many Inventions found out any higher felicity, than what GOD and His superabundant Mercy can confer? or is there a nearer way or more proper to this, than that which the Propher directs to, the sowing in Righteousness? Is it better to labour for Temporal than Eternal Things, for that meat which perisheth, than that which endureth to Life everlasting! Will ye plow Wickedness, and reap Iniquity, and eat the fruit of Lies? that is, will ye die, rather than live? This were a mad and shameful choice; and yet one of them we must make, for there is no middle course left us: It is certain the wages of Sin are Death, and that there is

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no way to Everlasting Life, but to have our fruit into Holiness. *Be not deceived; GOD is not mocked; For whatsoever a Man soweth, that shall he also reap. He that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap life everlasting.* Gall. 6. 7.

The Prophet having told them what they would Reap, returns to exhort them to the use of these means which are requisite in order to it, and to the performance of these duties to which Reaping in Mercy is promised; Which People have need to be put in mind of, for ordinarly they are very slack and negligent; Many would be at *reaping*, but few set themselves to the work and labour that must go before it, they would be putting in the sickle in Harvest time, thô they have not sown, nor made any preparation for it. But who sow not shall not reap, and that our sowing may be successful, we are bid first, *break up our fallow ground*, for Interpreters make the Prophets speech *Elliptick*, and will have *First* or *After* that, or some such word understood. If the ground be not prepared, sowing is to no purpose; the seed was lost that *fell on stonny ground among thorns, and in the high-way.* The good and precious Seed to be Sown is the Word of GOD, our Hearts are the Ground which must

muſt receive it, and they cannot receive it till they be made *Honeſt* and good as our Saviour ſpeakes Luke 8. 15, And in order to this they muſt be Prepared, pains muſt be taken on them. *Break up your fallow Ground.* If the Husband-man did not till his ground, caſt furrows in it and root out the weeds thereof, he needed not Sow, & would in vain expect a crop: So our hearts by their natural conſtitution are like *fallow ground* which was never laboured, which is indiſpoſed for receiving Seed from the Sower, and of it ſelf brings forth only Thorn and Briars. The natural product of mens hearts is only Sin and Wickedneſs. *GOD ſaw that the wickedneſs of Man was great in the Earth and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.* Gen: 6. 5. Naturally mens hearts are hard and averſe to all good; *The natural Man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of GOD for they are fooliſhneſs unto him, neither can he know them becauſe they are Spiritually diſcerned,* 1 Cor. 2. 14. But for as hard & bad as they are, they may through the grace of GOD be changed, and emproved to the better, if due pains be taken on them. The evil and naughtineſs of our hearts will not excuſe us from being or doing good, thô many pretend it. What a ſillie excuſe were it for a Husbandman to turn his back upon his

his Labour that his ground of it self yeelded nothing but Briars, and Thorns, and other weeds, should he not labour for all that, and by Art and Industry make it do, what of it self it cannot do? So, though our hearts be as fallow ground, yet let us break them up and weed them; Let us by continued care and diligence bear down their natural growth, & render them susceptible of better things, let us pluck up the prejudices of our Nature, throw away the choaking cares of this Life, and break off the course of Sin: Let us ply our hearts continually with Prayer, Meditation on the Word, use of our reason, the serious Consideration of our ways, and an attendance on these Means and Ordinances *God* hath appointed, and in process of time through the Grace of *God*, our hearts will be broken and changed from their natural barrennes to be fruitful in holines and good works. This is the way to break up our fallow ground, to make our hearts tractable and obedient, capable of Receiving & Nourishing the good Seed of the word, and unless this be done, our hearts will be as a Wilderness barren and altogether unfruitful in good: *Break up your fallow ground*, sayes Jeremy, *and Sow not among Thorns*. Jer. 4. 3. What a folly is it to Sow in a ground overgrown with Thorns and Briars;

Briars; And what can be expected from *Men, whoſe hearts are as hard as an Adamant, who refuſe to hearken, and pull away their Shoulder and ſtop their Ears, that they ſhould not Hear*: As the Prophet *Zechariah* ſpeaks 7. 11. There are many complaints now adays againſt the Sower, but there is more reaſon to retort them upon the ground, I mean to caſt the blame of not profiting upon the People themſelves rather than the Preacher; You are oftimes indiſpoſed, your hearts are not duely prepar'd therefore it is that the word Preached hath ſo litle effect in you *Mortifie* therefore your Luſts, ſubdue your Paſſions, daily be labour your hearts with *Acts* of Repentance and contrition, and the forementioned excerciſes of Prayer, *Meditation &c.* That they may be Softned & Fitted for the Seed of the word, and that it may proſper and ſpring up and bear fruit.

Thus you ſee your task, and that we may be excited with all ſpeed & diligence to go about it, and alſo encouraged with aſſurance of ſucceſs, it is added, *For it is time to ſeek the LORD, until he come & Raine Righteouſneſs upon you.* By *ſeeking the LORD* is meant the ſeeking his favour which is the ground of all our comfort and happineſs, or His help and aſſiſtance without which we labour in vain, and all we do is ineffectual:

fectual: And we then ſeek both the one and the other; when we ply heartily the Duties enjoyn'd us; for His Favour returns upon our Repentance and Obedience, and His Grace and Aſſiſtance is beſtowed as we labour and endeavour; He worketh together with us. Now, (ſaith *Hoſea*) *It is time thus to ſeek the Lord*, which implyeth firſt a proper ſeaſon or opportunity for it; opportunity ſhould be laid hold on, every thing ſhould be taken in its time, and Men are encouraged to work and labour ſo long as the time of doing it is not paſt. The ſeaſon for ſowing and breaking up is all the time of life, while GOD allows the uſe of Reaſon, the means of Grace, while he makes offers of Salvation, and calls by His providence. it is time to ſeek him: *Seek the Lord therefore while he may be found, and call upon him while he is near.* Iaiah 55. 6. If any have been negligent, if hitherto he has loitered and ſleep'd away his time, neither laboured nor ſown, but let his heart ly all this while fallow, that it is quite overgrown with weeds, it is a great fault, and calls for mourning; but it is no ground to deſpair nor reaſon to lay aſide the thoughts of this neceſſary work. Art thou ſenſible that thou haſt been too long a beginning? Doeſt thou wiſh that thou hadſt been more

wiſe?

wise? Arise, the day [illegible] while it is day; the Season is [illegible] lay hold on it and double thy [illegible] recover mispent time; which if [illegible], it shall be yet well with thee. *Praestat sero quam nunquam*: Better late than never. Remember they who wrought but one hour had their Hire. *If the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die, saith the Lord*, Ezek. 18, 21. *Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God and he will abundantly pardon.* Isaiah 55. 7. But secondly by saying it is time, the Prophet lays before them, that it is full time, and so not to be let slip; it is now time, but it will not be alwayes so, it is time, but this time is ever running and will once be at an end, and therefore delayes are dangerous. It is indeed time yet, but not to sleep and stand loitering; it is high time to awake out of sleep, to gird up our Loins, and to set about our work lest the night come in which no man can work; It is the great folly of many that they think they have Times and Seasons in their own hand, at least they act as if it were so: But we neither have alwayes time and opportunity, nor can we alwayes command Grace to use it aright, and therefore should take it

when it may be had and fear to deferr and put it off. Sometimes Men come to that, that they can neither seek nor work, have neither strength of Body or Mind, no use of any Faculty so much as to desire what is good for them? sometimes they seek and find no acceptance, desire and endeavour, but come no speed. It is hard to tell peremptorly the precise time when it is so with any, but the Scripture forewarns us of this, and bids us fear it. *When you spread forth your hands, I will hide my face from you, yea when you make many prayers I will not hear.* Isaiah 1. 15. and Jer. 11. 11. *I will bring evil upon them, which they shall not be able to escape, and thô they shall cry I will not hearken unto them.* and in the 5 and 6 Prophesie. *They shall go with their flocks and with their herds to seek the Lord, but they shall not find him, he hath withdrawn himself from them.* Wherefore as the Apostle enjoyns, *Let us exhort one another daily, while it is called to day, lest any of you be hardned with the deceitfulness of sin.* Heb. 3. 13. You that are striken in age, will I hope readily acknowledge, That it is time (if ever) for you to seek the Lord, and ply this business of your Salvation for your time is near spent, your day is ready to set and almost at an end. The Husband-man useth to be busie when the Season is almost at a close, especially if before he has loitered and been idle. And you that are young have no less reason to fall to quickly,

ly, for thô by the Course of Nature you may live a good time; yes you know that Course may and has been often interrupted, and none knows how soon this may befall him. Wherefore let neither Young nor Old give sleep to their Eyes, or slumber to their Eye-lids; but let both Young and Old seek and labour with all diligence. *To day, saith the Holy Ghost, if ye will hear, harden not your hearts.* But to go on;

In the last place, We have here an encouragement to what is called for, proposed from the certainty of the success, *He will come and rain Righteousness upon you.* In worldly things Men often seek and labour, but do not obtain what they would be at. But, saith the Lord, *I said not unto the House of Jacob, seek ye me in vain.* Is. 45. 19. *He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* Heb. 11. 6. He is sometime found of them that seek Him not; and therefore it is not to be doubted, but He will be found of those who seek him aright, and in due time; it is true He is not alwayes presently found, but thô He hide Himself for a little, He will not do it for ever, and therefore we ought not to weary, but to wait patiently till we find Him whom our Soul loveth. *Seek*, (saith the Text) *till He come*, which requires constancy in Seeking. *There is need of patience to them that have done the will of God, that they may receive the promise.* Heb. 10. 36. It is childish and unreasonable peevishness, to fret because

we are not presently answered, to desist from our work, because we do not instantly reap the fruit thereof. They make too great haste to their Doom, who conclude themselves forsaken and reprobate, because presently they find not GOD's presence and the Gracious Tokens thereof. What is delayed is not denied, GOD knoweth His hour and waiteth till it come, and so should we; He putteth off, to try our Faith and Constancy, to exercise our Patience, to quicken our Desires; *Be patient therefore brethren unto the coming of the Lord. Behold the Husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient, stablish your hearts for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.* Jam. 5. 7.

Now what is the Lord to do when He comes? *He will* (saith the Text) *Rain Righteousness upon you.* The allusion to Husbandry is still continued, all know how necessary Rain is to the Husband-man, without it he Labours and Sows to no purpose: But if the Heavens Rain upon him, his labours prosper, he sees the fruit thereof, eats and is satisfied. The dew of Heaven is no less necessary to our Spiritual Husbandry, it also depends entirely on the blessing of GOD, without that all our labour is in vain. *Without Me* (saith Christ) *ye can do nothing*, John 15. But as GOD giveth Rain and Snow from Heaven to water the Earth,

Earth, to make it bring forth and bud, that it may give Seed to the Sower, and Bread to the Eater, ſo in Spiritual bleſſings He will not be wanting to theſe who are not wanting to themſelves. To theſe who would Sow in Righteouſneſs, and labour to break up their fallow ground, and ſeek Him to bleſs their labours, He will come and Rain down Righteouſneſs upon them, that is, His grace and Spirit ſhall fall down (like the Rain) upon them whereby they may Encreaſe & Abound in all Truth and Righteouſneſs. *Bleſſed are they who Hunger and Thirſt after Righteouſneſs for they ſhall be ſatisfied.* Mat. 5. 6. *This is the Heritage of the Servant of the LORD, and their Righteouſneſs is of Me ſaith the LORD.* Iſa. 54. 17. But that our righteouſneſs is of GOD ſhould not make us ſuperſede our own labours and endeavours, *We muſt not*, as one ſaith, *ly laitering in the ditch, waiting till Omnipotence pull us out.* It's GOD who cauſeth the Graſs to grow, and Herb for the ſervice of man, are therefore the Labours of the Husbandman uſeleſs? Put thy ſelf in the way of grace, and grace ſhall be given thee. Up and beſtirr thy ſelf, *commit thy way unto the LORD, truſt in Him, and he ſhall bring forth thy Righteouſneſs as the Light, and thy Judgement as the Noonday:* Pſ. 37. 56.

Life of GOD. pag. 75.

But ay, Some underſtand theſe Words of Chriſt, and not without reaſon, for he that cometh,

cometh, or is to come, and will come, are his frequent titles in the Scripture, St. *John the Baptist* asked if he was the Christ under this designation, *Mat.* 11. 3. And the main end *of His coming was to teach and* give Righteousness. He is called the *LORD our Righteousness.* Jer. 23. 6. Who sheweth the way of Righteousness, who worketh it in us, and who by the imputation of his own Righteousness to us, causeth us to be dealt as if we were perfectly Righteous. *For He hath made Him Sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the Righteousness of GOD in him.* 2 Corin. 5. 21. Here then is a promise of Christ and his Benefits, and happy are they who partake thereof and have them Communicated to them: They who are sanctified by inward inherent Righteousness, & outwardly Cloathed with Christs imputed Righteousness, have no reason to fear, but all reason to rejoyce. *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of GODS elect,* it is GOD that *Justifieth, who is he that condemneth,* &c. Ro. 8. 33. *Fear not litle Flock, it is your Fathers will to give you a Kingdom.* A Kingdom of more glory than all the Kingdomes of the world, and it is a Kingdom which shall never end. This is the reward which GOD will certainly bestow on his Righteous Servants and Children; of which reward some make the Raining Righteousness in the Text a promise; for they take Righteousness to be the reward of it,

as

as in the following verſe, iniquity is taken for the Puniſhment thereof. But whither that be the main intent of the Words certainly it may be comprehended in them, for the Fruits and Effects of Righteouſneſs are alwayes given where it ſelf is given. Holineſs and the glorious reward of it cannot be disjoyned, ſo that he who has the one is ſure of the other. The Wicked cannot inherit glory, nor can the Righteous be excluded. Inſtead therefore of perplexing our ſelves, what ſhall come of us, whither we ſhall go to Heaven, let us cheartfully do our Duty, and heartily endeavour to be Righteous in the ſight of GOD, for hereby we may be aſſured of Eternal Life. The one is the Earneſt and Pledge of the other.

Hitherto I have handled and applyed the Text, with a reſpect to Mens private and perſonal ſtate. But as was ſaid in the beginning, the Prophet delivered this Advice, with a regard to the publick ſtate of his people both *Civil* and *Eccleſiaſtick*: And ſo it propoſes the true Way and Method, of preventing and removing publick Calamities and Diſaſters from Church and State; which is, to put away Sin and Wickedneſs, and to encourage and promote Piety and Godlineſs. As the Prophet forewarns them of very ſad and heavy Judgments, ſo all alongſt he plainly inculcates the cauſe thereof, *viz.* Their Pride and Wantonneſs, the neglect of *GOD* and of His *Worſhip*, and

and a gross contempt of, and disobedience to *His Righteous Laws*. For this cause he told them they were to be so *Exemplary punished*, and that nothing could save them from utter ruine, or procure the lengthning of their tranquillity, but the *ceasing from Sin*, and the doing that which is right in the sight of *God*. Both the *preservation* and *ruine* of Kingdoms and publick States is of *God*, and he is moved to the one or the other, according as they are Righteous or wicked; For, as *Solomon* saith, *righteousness exalteth a Nation, but sin is a reproach to any People*; *Proverb.* 14. 34 which *maxim* of the wise Man is clearly exemplified in *Sacred History*, and was wisely observed in relation to the *Jews*, by *Achior* the Captain of the Sons of *Ammon*, for in his speech to *Holofernes*, he told him, That *whilest they sinned not before their GOD, they prospered because the GOD that hateth iniquity was with them, but when they departed from the way which He appointed them they were destroyed in many sore Battels, and were led captives into a land that was not theirs, and the Temple of their GOD was cast to the ground, and their Cities were taken by the Enemies.* From which wise Observation he concluded, as wisely his Advice to the same *Holofernes*; *Now therefore my Lord and Governour, if there be any Errour in this People, and they sin against their GOD, let us consider that this shall be their ruine, and let us go up and we shall overcome them. But if there be no iniquity in their Nation, let my Lord pass by, lest their Lord defend*

defend them, and their GOD be for them, and we become a Reproach before all the World. Judith. 5. 17. &c. Righteouſneſs is the greateſt Security of a People, it is the ſtrongeſt Bond of Union amongſt themſelves, and will defend the Frontiers better than Garriſons or Armies can do: For it ſecureth the Protection of the Almighty, who can defeat the ſtrongeſt and moſt numerous Forces, and *who when a Man's wayes pleaſe the Lord maketh his Enemies to be at peace with him* If therefore we have any concernment for the Church and State whereof we are Members, if we would have GOD to do good to our *Zion*, and to *build up the walls of our Jeruſalem*; if we would have Him to ſettle Peace within their Walls, and Proſperity within their Palaces, let every one of us return from the evil of our wayes; let us ſeek GOD with all our heart, retrive true Piety, and true Religion, and by the works of Real Righteouſneſs ſtudy to pleaſe GOD. If we do this, then His Heart will be towards us and His Delight will be in us; Then we ſhall become His *Pleaſant Vineyard*, which He will Fence and Plant, out of which He will gather the Stones, and in which He will Build a Tower for Himſelf; He will Cheriſh our Church and State, and do all that can be deſired for their Beauty Order and Peace. But if inſtead of the pleaſant grapes of Righteouſneſs, we yeeld the Sowre Grapes of Iniquity; If inſtead of Judgement GOD ſee oppreſſion; If inſtead of Righteouſneſs

teousneſs he hear a cry; If inſtead of the Sweet Smelling Savour of a Chriſtian converſation, we ſend forth the noiſome & ſtinking ſcent of Sin and impiety, ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, then he will utterly abandon us: I will tell you what he will then do to His Vineyard, *I will, ſaith the LORD, take away the hedge thereof, & it ſhall be eaten up: And break the wall thereof & it ſhall be troden down. And I will lay it waſte: It ſhall not be pruned nor digged, but there ſhall come up Briars and Thorns: I will alſo command the Clouds that they Rain no Rain upon it.* Iſa. 5. 5. Our land will alwayes be made to mourn ſo long as Sin and Iniquity abound in it: Publick Peace and Proſperity cannot be expected till there be a return of Righteouſneſs, of True & Solid Piety: Till that appear we need not look for good. Let us therefore ſeek the Lord & by Fervent and Effectual Prayers beſeech him, to give repentance unto all people, and to Rain down true Righteouſneſs upon all ranks and orders of men, that it may be well with every one of us, and with the land we live in: For then our eaſe ſhould be happy, and then both Sion and Jeruſalem would have reaſon to rejoyce, for the Lord then would *ſtrengthen the bars of their gates, he would bleſs the people within them, make peace in their borders, & fill them with the fineſt of the wheat.* Now unto Him that is able to do this for us, unto the King Eternal, Immortal, Inviſible, the only wiſe *God*, be Honour & Glory for ever and ever *Amen.*

The

The SECOND SERMON ON LUKE *Chap. 6. Verſ.* 46.

Why call ye Me LORD, LORD, *and do not the things which I ſay?*

THE word LORD is not only a title of Honour, but it implies Dominion and Authority; ſo that to call one LORD, is to acknowledge Him Superiour, and to profeſs Subjection to Him. Chriſt is called LORD by *David*, *Pſa.* 110. And is almoſt always deſign'd ſo in Scripture: This Name is due to Him both by vertue of his Nature and Office, ſo that to call Jeſus LORD is to Receive and Acknowledge him for the Son of GOD, the *Meſſias* or Chriſt, and the Saviour of the World; For theſe reaſons He is our LORD, and is called ſo in Scripture, and they do not underſtand what they ſay, who do not mean theſe things when they call Jeſus LORD.

By the things which Chriſt ſaith, is to be underſtood

derſtood the whole Doctrine of Chriſt, as it reſpects both Faith and Manners. A true diſciple will receive whatever his LORD ſaith, and will owne all that His Authority is concerned in: But he is diſobedient and rejects His authority, who rejects either the Truths required to be believed, or the things commanded to be done. To do then what Jeſus ſaith, is to Frame both the inward temper & ſentiments of our heart, and our outward Converſation according to the Doctrine of Chriſt, it is to receive by a Sincere Faith, all the Truths revealed by Him, and to make Conſcience of obſerving what He has Commanded. The *Credenda* or things to be believed are ſum'd up in that ſhort ſummary & forme of ſound Words, called the Apoſtles Creed: The *Agenda* or things to be done are contained in the Ten Commands given to *Moſes*, that excellent Commentary thereon we have in the Sermon on the Mount, and may be learnt from His other Diſcourſes and the Epiſtles of the Apoſtles. All which in ſhort teach us to forbear Evil and to do Good, to deny ungodlineſs and wordly luſts, and to live Soberly, Righteouſly, and Godly in this preſent world: The Laws of Chriſt diſcharge all Sin and Wickedneſs both in the Inward & Outward Man, and do require Purity of Heart and Life; they teach us to lay aſide all covetouſneſs and inordinate deſires, to deſpiſe this preſent Life,

and

and to set our hearts upon the things above, they order the putting off Wrath, Malice, Anger, Envy, and to put on Bowels of Charity and Compassion towards our Brethren. To conclude the summe of what Christ calls to us for directing our morals is that we should deny our selves, that is Freely and Heartily Renounce any thing though never so dear rather than offend GOD; That we should take up our Cross, that is Chearfully and Willingly, Patiently and Contentedly submitt to whatsoever afflictions GOD is pleased to lay upon us, and to undergo the trouble which cannot be avoided without Sin; And lastly, that we follow Him *viz:* In the wayes of Devotion, Zeall, Affiance and Love towards GOD; of Humility, Meekness, Forbearance and Charity towards Men, in which he hath gone before us; and that we labour carefully to imitate that perfect example of Lowliness and Purity which He hath left unto us. This is the summe of what Christ hath said, and these are the things he would have observed by all who call Him LORD

But what GOD hath joined together, Men have learned to put asunder. GOD hath united the Profession and Practice of Christianity, He hath Commanded that all who call and owne Him for their Lord and Master should also carefully do His Will: But this is not much looked to, these things Men sepa-

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rate from one another how contrary soever the same be to the Divine Institution. In our Saviour's time we read of some who really believed in Him, they were inwardly perswaded, that He was the *Messias*, but yet they would not profess Him openly for fear of being cast out of the Syngogue. But now the Scene is altered, and as there is no hazard in making a publick Profession of Christ, so many avowedly do it, yet withal they refuse to obey Him; they owne His Name, but never mind His Will and Pleasure, they confidently call Him LORD, LORD, but the doing what he saith is the least thing in their thoughts. In those dayes, Christ wants not Followers, He hath Disciples enough, the number of Christians is not small; but they are such as are so only *nomine tenus*, only by Name and Profession, except that they say so, it could not be well known that they were the Disciples of Jesus Christ; except that they are sometimes seen in the Church, and hear'd cry Lord, Lord, they might readily be taken for *Turks*, *Pagans*, and the Enemies of Christ. Now the Church is indeed pretty numerous, but if the secret *Atheist* and the openly profane, if the impious Scorner & sneaking Hypocrite, if the Glutton and Drunkard, the Fornicator and Adulterer, the Covetous, Unjust and Dishonest Person, the Malicious, Revengful and Common Swearer; in a Word if the care-

careless & indifferent, & such persons were removed as are destitute of *Piety* & *Good works* & such who are ordinarly guilty of gross Scandalous Crimes, which are altogether inconsistent with the Sincere Belief of the Gospel, I fear the remains should then be but few, and the *Church* would become as thin as now it useth to be throng. I shall not be so peremptory as to say that there should scarce be so many behind in every Parish, City, and Congregation, as *Abraham* desired to find Righteous Persons in *Sodom*, but sure I am, the Number should be very small and inconsiderable!

Now that they whose Lives are contrary to the Rules of Christianity, and who in their works deny Christ, should yet profess Him with their Mouths, and confidently pretend to all the Priviledges of His true Disciples, is somewhat strange and unaccountable, for whatever doth perswade and excite us to believe in Christ, doth also oblige us to obey Him; that which binds to the one, makes the other also necessary. And if our obedience may be any ways dispensed with, it Matters litle whether or not we adhere to the profession of the Gospel, as our Saviour intimates to us plainly in the words of our Text, why call ye Me LORD, LORD, and do not the things which I say.

Which words may be understood either by way of Question, or as an Expostulation. I intend to consider them both ways.

And

And first, as it seems a Question, and taking it so, it is as much as if He had said, what mean you by professing My Name, and giving Me out to be your Master? when you do not My Will, neither offer to keep My Commandements. What end do you propose to your selves in this? What Advantage do you expect thereby? Can you shew any reason for this behaviour of yours? If you be not ingenuous when you call Me Lord, what makes you flatter Me? And if you really think I am your Lord and Master, why is not your Practice suitable & consonant to your Belief and Profession? Consider I pray you and think with your selves and see if ye can give any satisfactory account of this? This I say is the sense and meaning of the Text when we construe it as an Interrogatory, the scope and design of which is to shew the great absurdity and unreasonableness of making a Profession of Christ, without accompanying that Profession with a suitable Practice, seing whatever doth induce us to the one, doth also oblige us to the other. We have the same obligations to both; and that this may more clearly appear, we will consider a little the True and Reasonable Motives which perswade us to the Embracing of Christ, and shall shew that if we be ingenuous in owning and acknowledging them, they cannot but stirr us up to pay Him all Due and Holy Obedience.

But

But in reckoning up these *Motives* we do not think our selves obliged to count that as one, which yet perhaps is the most common and general inducement, I mean the Custome and Fashion of the Country. The generality of Christians are so, only because Christ is believed and professed in these Countries where they have been Born and Bred; And they do profess the Christian Religion for the same reason that others do *Mahumetanism* and *Paganism*, because this was the Religion of their Fore-fathers, and that generally these about them do the like; So that if it had been their luck to have been Born in another Countrie and under another Climate they would have owned another LORD, and been of another Religion. I say we will not consider this as any true Motive to the receiving of Christ; Because it is neither Sufficient nor Reasonable, and he who embraceth Christ upon no other grounds than this, his embracement is litle to be valued or regarded. Neither is it matter of wonder, that such an one yeeld to the Prevailing Tentations of Sin, and refuse compliance with the Precepts of a strict and Holy living, especially when he perceives them fallen into desuetude, and that Vice and Ungodliness are more Commonly Practised; for he that in these things hath no other reason or Motive than the custome & fashion of the place he lives in, will no doubt be still car-

ried away with the tide: But what a Shameful and Unworthy a thing is it, to be Guided and Directed in matters of so great moment, only by the practice of others, and the custome of the place we live in? The Apostle St. Peter Commands us to be always ready to give an answer to every Man who asketh a Reason of the hope that is in us: And truly it is a very Slender and Poor one, when we have no other but that we were so educated, and that this Faith and Religion were professed, and in Fashion where we were Born and Bred. Indeed it is no small happiness to be Born within the Church, and under the light of the Gospel, and among those who may educat us in the Christian Faith, because hereby we have an early occasion of acquainting our selves with those Great and Important things which concern our Eternal Salvation. And therefore, we have alwayes good reason to bless GOD for these Excellent Advantages of our Birth and Education, without which, it's like we should have never come to the true Knowledge of Christ. But yet this doth not Excuse us from reasonable Enquirie and Search into the Truth and Grounds of the Christian Faith: when we come to Age and the Years of Discretion, we should be ashamed to Pin our Faith upon our Grand-mothers Sleive; we ought to fix it on a better bottom then meer hear-say; we should search into the

Grounds

Grounds and Reasons why we should rather be of the Christian Religion, then of any other; and should labour to understand what Obligations are upon us to Embrace Christ, and none other to be our Lord and Master For unless we do this, we do not act like Men, our Faith is neither reasonable nor Divine, but Bruitish and Stupide, which will never endure the shock of any temptation. That which should chiefly perswade us to Embrace Christ, and to become his Disciples, is the consideration of his being sent from GOD, and a serious reflection on these undoubted truths and irrefragable Testimonies, we have received thereof. Jesus Christ was foretold by the Prophets, and when he was in the World, GOD bare Witness unto him by the appearance of Angels, and several voices from Heaven, and diverse other astonishing signes; He wrought many Miracles and did many things, not only beyond humane reach, But beyond the reach of Nature it self, and He gave others Power to do the like; His Death was accompanyed with many amazing Wonders, so that the World was astonished thereat: But Death had no power over Him, for He rose from the dead and appeared unto many, and last of all, was seen to ascend up into Heaven. When He was gone, what He foretold His Disciples came to pass, and as they Preached the Gospel

pel which he had taught them, so GOD gave Testimony unto them by Signs and Wonders and diverse Miracles, and Gifts of the Holy Ghost, which followed them: So that the whole World, was constrained to receive and believe their Doctrine. We have as great Evidence, and certainty for these things, as is possible to be had, and is sufficient to reason any man into the belief of them. And by these things, it doth appear that Christ is no Imposture, nor the Gospel, a Cunningly devised fable, but a certaine Divine truth; which teacheth us that GOD hath highly exalted Jesus Christ; and given him a Name, which is above every Name, that, *at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in Heaven, and things in Earth, and things under the Earth, and that every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is the Lord, to the glory of GOD the Father*, Philip: 2. 9. If we believe in Christ, if we embrace *Him* to be our *LORD*, it should be for these reasons, and upon these grounds, otherwise our Faith is not valid.

This is the first and true inducement to the Receiving Christ, and if we embrace Him, and make Him our LORD for this reason, because He is sent of GOD, and hath received all power in Heaven and in Earth; then we cannot but conceive an indispensible necessity of yeilding all Obedience and Service: For GOD hath not made Him a titular Lord, He hath not given Him a

Name

Name of Dominion and Power only; but He hath constituted Him a Lord, which must be served and obeyed, and the Power and Dominion which He hath received is not nominal, but real, actual, and effective: And consequently the Subjection which is required to be given Him, must be something else than words and complements; it must be more than a barren and empty Profession, it must be real Deeds, faithful Services, and actual Obedience to His Laws and Commands; or else whatever we profess or say, *He* will never owne or acknowledge us to be *His* true Subjects and Servants. *A Son honoureth his father, and a servant his master, if I then be a father, where is my honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear?* saith the Lord by the Prophet *Malachie*, 1. 6. If we do really acknowledge another to be *Lord* and *Master*, we must also acknowledge our selves to be his *Servants*; and Servants owe Obedience, therefore we reproach our selves so often as we call Christ our Lord, and yet refuse to obey Him. Our Ingenuity in calling Him Lord, can never appear so long as we do not heartily and readily obey Him: For as GOD speaketh in the forecited place. *Offer it now unto thy Governour, will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person?* Try I pray you and see if any Man will be put off as thou thinkest to put off *Christ*, when thou hast no mind to obey Him. Will any *Prince*

look

look upon those as his Subjects, who pay him no Homage, and refuse him the Acts and Testimonies of their *Allegiance*? Will any *Master* count him his Servant, who never minds his will, but doth his own? And how unreasonable then art thou not to serve and obey him whom thou callest and believest to be thy *Soveraign Lord and Master*? If we be perswaded that it is necessary to receive him, whom GOD hath sent, lest we be esteemed Rebells for resisting the Ordinance of Heaven. We ought also to believe and be perswaded, that its absolutely necessary to obey Him: For its all one not to owne Christ, and not to obey His will. Disobedience to a lawful Lord and Master is a great Crime, and passeth not unpunished. *Ye call me Master and Lord*, (saith Christ) *and ye say well, for so I am.* John 13. 13. If He then be your *Lord* and *Master*, see that ye do whatsoever He hath Commanded you, else He will be sure to punish your Disobedience. *These my Servants that would not that I should reign over them, bring them hither to me, and slay them before mine eyes. The Lord Jesus Christ will one day appear with His mighty Angels in flaming fire, to take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.* 1 Thess. 1. 8. The Lord will accept of nothing instead of this, neither Prayers, nor Sacrifices, nor Professions will make compensation for it; For as *Samuel* said to *Saul*, *hath the Lord*

Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and ſacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than ſacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams; for rebellion is as the ſin of witchcraft, and ſtubbornneſs is as iniquitie and idolatry, becauſe thou haſt rejected the word of the Lord, he hath rejected thee. 1 Sam. 15. 22.

Thus we ſee if we embrace Chriſt, and take him for our Lord, becauſe we are aſſured he is ſent from God, and is ordained by him the Lord of Angels and Men, that the ſame doth alſo tye and oblige us to honour him, not only with *calves of our lips*, not only by Profeſſing *with our Mouths*, that He is *our* Lord and *Maſter*, but by doing Him Real and Heartie Service, and giving all *Due Obedience* to His Will and Pleaſure.

But further, is it *Love to Chriſt* that tyes us to Him, and which makes us adhere to the Profeſſion of *His Name*? If ſo then this will oblige us to *Serve* and Obey Him. We read of ſome Servants under *the Law*, who ſo loved their Maſters, that they would not part from them, and who though they might have had their freedom, yet would not accept of it, but ſuffered their Ears to be bored through, that they might ſtay with their Maſters for ever. And certainly Chriſt is ſuch a Maſter, as deſerves to be thus loved: For never any did ſo much for gaining the affection of their Servants as he hath done to gaine ours: He hath

hath first *Loved us*, and that with an *Admirable and Astonishing love. Greater love then this hath no Man, then that a Man lay down his Life for his Friends*; and he hath not refused this expression *of Love* to us, for he laid down His *Life, and shed His Precious Blood for our sakes.* There is therefore all the reason in the World that we should love *Him*, and adhere to Him. Besides what obligation the Commandment of GOD layeth upon us, to take Him *for our LORD*, the sense of *His love* should oblige us to do it, we are very ungrateful if we do not *love Him*, who hath so highly loved us, and who hath bought us at so dear a rate, not with *Corruptible things* as Gold and Silver, but with His *own most Precious Blood.* Now if it be love which moves us to call *Christ LORD, LORD*, to make profession of His Name, and Gospel, then certainly this will excite us also to do His Will and observe His commandments. It is the very Natural result of love, the proper Fruits and Expressions of it, to be observant of the Person *who is loved*, to take a delight in doing their will and pleasure. Love doth alwayes kyth it self this way, and it is simply impossible for it not to do so, and its most certain they have litle or no love who cannot shew it this way: Hereby a Wife manifesteth her affection to her Husband, and Children their love and respect to their Parents, and one Man to another, and when this Me-

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thod is not followed, & these Evidences given, do we not presently conclude that the persons have little Kindness or Regard for each other? Now our *love to Christ*, must follow the same course, and express it self in the same manner; *if ye love Me*, saith He, *Keep my Commandments.* John 14. 15. and again, *vers* 21. *He that hath My Commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me, if a Man love Me, he will keep My Words; But he that loveth Me not, keepeth not My sayings*, 23, 24. *verses.* And therefore, if *love* be the Motive of our *Professing* Christ, it will not rest there, it will carry us further even to the doing whatsoever He hath Commanded us.

Besides the two inducements already mentioned, there is one other Motive which may perswade us *to come to Christ*, and to yeeld our selves *His Disciples*, and that is the hope of these rewards He hath to bestow. These Services are much sought after which are Honourable and Profitable, and truly there is none which hath more either of *Honour* or Profit than this of the *Lord Jesus Christ*: There is more advantage of having *Him* our Master, than in serving Kings and Princes, or the greatest in the World: For besides the *Temporal Benefits* and *Spiritual Blessings*, which *He* gives in this present Life, *He* giveth Glory and Eternal *Happiness* in the Life to come, & therefore we may with good reason, say with St. *Peter*, when our LORD asked him, *will*

ye alſo go away from Me? to whom ſhal we go? thou haſt the Words of Eternal Life, John 6. &c. The hope of reward then may reaſonably excite us to *Embrace Chriſt*, but we do in vain look for *His* reward without the paying *Him* due obedience. What I pray you, is there any *Man* that will pay his Servant his wages, when he hath not performed his work, do we think our LORD will beſtow upon us the *Eternall rewards of the other World*, when we have done nothing for it? *He* told the Woman of Canaan, *that it was not meet to take the Childrens Bread, and caſt it to the Dogs*, and we may be ſure *He* will never think it Juſt to make the Children of diſobedience to ſhare alike, as thoſe that do ſincerly obey *Him*; *Not every one that ſayth unto Me, LORD, LORD, ſhall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doth the Will of My Father which is in Heaven. Many will ſay unto Me in that day*, &c. *Matth.* 21. 22. 33. *Heb.* 5. 9. *He is a juſt Judge who will have no reſpect of perſons, but will certainly render to every Man according to his deeds, to them who by Patient Countinuance in well-doing ſeek for Glory, and Honour, and immortality, he will give eternal Life, but unto them that are contentious, and doth not obey the truth, but obey unrighteouſneſs, he will give indignation and wrath*, Rom. 2. 6. &c.

And as Chriſt will never beſtow Heaven and that Eternal Weight of Glory which is above, upon thoſe who do not obey Him; ſo none

none but those who keep His Commandements are capable of them. The Dignities and Enjoyments of this present World may be possessed by any: Both Good and Bad we see can be invested with them, but as for the Heavenly Glory none can enjoy it, but such as are worthy thereof. As the Eye is required to Seeing, and the Ear to Hearing, and the Palate to Tasting; so the previous dispositions of Holiness and Righteousness, are requisit and absolutely necessary to the Enjoyment of Heaven and Eternal Life: *Without holiness* (saith the Apostle) *no man can see GOD.* Heb. 12. 14. Seeing it is certain that we keep in the other World the same Temper and Inclinations which we have in this, therefore he who is not prepared and disposed before hand by the exercise of Vertue, and the leading a Life according to the Commandements of GOD, is no more capable of Heaven and the Pleasures thereof, than a Beast is of the intellectual and rational Enjoyments of Men. Heaven is not to be considered so much under the notion of some glorious Place, as of a state which brings us near to GOD, and makes us partakers of His *Divine Nature*; and that it is a Life of perfect Holiness and Purity. Wherefore they who seek for Heaven without the desires and endeavours to be truly Holy, are wholly ignorant of, and do quite mistake the thing, and do not know what they would be at. Let

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any object or enjoyment be in it self never so good or excellent; yet if it be not agreeable to the faculties, and suitable to the inclinations of him who hath it; it affords no satisfaction or delight: And if he hath any averseness thereunto, it disgusts and procures trouble and pain. The Covetous Worlding, the Lascivious and Intemperate Person, relish no pleasure in the Church, in the exercises of Devotion, and in the company of Pious and Devout Souls, who are wholly mortified to the World and the things thereof; these are irksome, painful, and wearysome things unto them. And we may be sure, Heaven will be yet far more troublesome, because it will be a greater violence to their Inclinations. Therefore could we suppose a wicked Man translated into Heaven, he yet would find no Heaven of it, I mean he would not look upon himself as happy there, because he would find nothing agreeable to his mind, or grateful to his inclinations; he would taste as little pleasure in all that that place could afford him; as a *swine* would do to be wrapped in Odours, and fine Linnen, and decked with all manner of precious Ornaments: As that Beast would still count the Mire and Puddle more delicious, so a wicked and ungodly Person would esteem the lowest, the most brutish and sensual pleasures here to be preferrable to the *Joys of Heaven* it self. Heaven certainly is as much the

the natural consequence of a holy and good Life, as it is the reward obtained for our Obedience: And *Hell* is no more the determined punishment of Sin, than it is the necessary result and effect of it. As a Weight naturally presseth towards the Earth, so *Sin* sinketh a Man necessarly into *Hell*, that is the outmost misery. Whereas true Goodness and Righteousness put him without the reach of it, in that they elevate and raise him towards GOD who is the Fountain of all happiness. *Holiness* therefore and *Obedience* to *Christ* is the *True and only way to Heaven*, he that Trades not this Path shall never come there.

Thus we have considered the Text as it seems the Proposal of a Question, or Interrogatory, asking the reason and cause why those who *own and acknowlege Christ, to be their LORD and Master*, do not sincerely *obey Him, & keep His Commandments*? From which occasion hath been taken, to shew the unreasonable and absurdity of Disjoining these which should be Conjoined together, I mean the *Profession* and *Practice* of *Christianity*; Seeing that which moveth and exciteth to the one, doth also call for the other. Now, before I leave this point, allow me to ask you a few Questions, and to reason the matter a litle with you. What is it that *perswadeth you to call Christ Lord*? is it that you may *please God*, by receiving him, whom he hath so highly exalted? If this be the reason,

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do you not see that by the same reason you are obliged to *serve*, *and obey Him*? For this also is the *will of GOD*. Is it *love to Christ*, which makes you adhere to Him? you see *Love* and *obedience* are inseparable, and that *love* cannot be ingenuously professed, if *obedience* be denyed. Finally, Do you *embrace Christ* on the account of that *rich reward* which He hath promised? But do you not see that this cannot be expected, without *keeping His Commandments* and performing that work which He requireth, and hath intrusted to you. What reason can be given for refusing an entire subjection to the *Doctrine of Jesus Christ*. Is there any Motive or Inducement to believe, which doth not equally perswade to *Obey*? It is evident then, that if the matter be laid home to Men they can answer nothing, but must *stand speechless*. Out of thine own mouth thou shalt be Condemned, O wicked and slouthful Servant; For thou oughtest to have *obeyed* Him whom thou knowest and believest, to be thy LORD? Shouldest thou not study to please Him whom thou professest so much to *Love*? And oughtest thou not to have done thy work if thou wouldst have had thy wages? What a shameful and unworthy a thing is it for Men to Act so unlike Men? To shew so little reason; Nay, to walk so contrary to all reason, in these matters of the greatest Moment and Concernment? The practice of *Heathens* and

Infidels

Infidells is not so absurd as this comes to; they do not *Obey Christ*, because they do not *believe in Him*, or they will not profess Him, because they have no mind to obey Him. So one tells us of the Men of *Cogno*, that at first they were easily perswaded by the *Portugueze* to *Embrace Christianity*, and *were Baptized in great abundance*: But afterwards when they found it did require some strictness, which they had no mind to bear, that they must leave their *Heathen Practices*, particularly their multitude of Women, they came back to the Church, renounc'd what they had done, and return'd back to their *Indulgent Heathenism*. For they knew not how to reconcile the *Christian vow* with living in the *open Breach of it*, being too honest for such Practices. And certainly it is far more reasonable to declare that we do not believe in Christ nor yet owne Him; Than to profess both, and in the mean time continue disobedient to Him, if we lay aside our Obedience let us lay aside our Faith and Profession too, for that but makes us the more Guilty and Lyable to a greater Condemnation.

And thus we are brought from considering the Text question wise, to consider it as an expostulation, or sharp reproof made to all empty and barren Professors, and such as rest in the meer Faith and Knowledge of Christ, without offering to bring forth the Fruits

Fruits of Obedience and Holiness. Now taking the words thus (as it indeed appears they ought to be taken so) they may be thus Paraphrased; *Why call ye Me Lord, Lord, and do not these things which I say?* That is, "Why "should you take My Name in your Mouth, "seing you hate Instruction, and cast My "Words behind you? How dare you be so "bold, as to call Me *your Lord*, seing you re"fuse to obey Me? Do you not know what "a presumption this is? And how highly it "displeaseth Me? I had far rather you'd dis"owne Me. And it would please Me much "better that you forsake My Service altoge"ther: *Than to say, and not to do.* What do "you fancy, I am ignorant of your wayes? "Or do you think, I am altogether such an "one as your selves; one who doth secretly "countenance & aprove of Vice and Sin? Do "you think I will sit with such an affront? No "certainly, I will not pass it; I will both re"prove you and punish you; either therefore "do those things which I say unto you, or "else cease to *call Me Lord, Lord.*

This is the sense and meaning of the words, and we need not think it very strange, that Christ should so passionately reprove, & expostulate with such Disciples, as are unobservant of His Will, and negligent to keep His Commandements: For their carriage and behaviour is very provoking, it throweth a great

great deal of Dishonour and Reproach upon our Lord, and is very prejudicial to His Interest; because it doth very much obstruct the Advancement of His Kingdom.

First, I say, the Disobedience and the naughty Lives of those who call themselves *Christians*, cannot but very much provoke the *Lord Jesus Christ*: For He being really a *Man* as well as *GOD*, therefore we must think, He hath all the Passions which are Natural unto Men, and which are not the effects of the present Corruption and Disorder of our Nature by Sin: and its not only Natural even to the best to be grieved and irritated, when they consider how unworthily they are dealt with by those who are strictly obliged unto them: But also to be so provoked and grieved upon such a just occasion, is consistent with the most perfect vertue. Unless therefore we make a *Stoical Apathie* to be true perfection, it is impossible but that *Jesus Christ* must be displeased and troubled when His own Disciples slight and neglect Him. No Man can take it well to be slighted and abused by any: But the ungratitude and undutifulness of Servants and Children, is an insolency which none can patiently bear with. The wickedness of the rest of the World is indeed grievous; but that the Disciples of *Jesus Christ* should commit Sin and prove Ungodly, cannot but be thought highly offensive. The *Heathen* know not what

they do, and therefore they deserve Pity and Compassion: Our *Lord* doth not expect Obedience from them, or any regard to His Will and Pleasure, because He is not yet made known unto them, which doth somewhat excuse them. But I pray, what excuse can be pretended for those to whom He hath manifested Himself, and to whom His Majesty, Power, and Glory have been revealed? That they should baffle His Doctrine, despise His Laws, and work Wickedness, and run into all excess and riot, is a most irritating, insolent, and inexcusable thing. This cannot but stir up His Anger, vex and grieve His Spirit.

Especially, considering in the next place, what reproach and dishonour He receives thereby. It's well known how much the carriage of Servants and Friends tends either to a Man's Credit or Disgrace. He hath honour whose Family is kept in good Order, whose Servants and Children behave vertuously and discretly; but when they are vicious and untruly He is sham'd and affronted. Thus the Patriarch *Jacob*, said, to his Sons *Simeon* and *Levi*, because of their Cruelty committed upon the *Shechemites*, *Ye have troubled Me to make me stink among the Inhabitants of the Land*, Gen. 34. 30. And certainly corrupt and bad *Christians* do the same dis-service unto *Christ their Lord*; they occasion Him to be dishonoured and

and lightly esteemed, by such as are strangers unto Him. GOD told *David*, that the Murder and Adultery he had committed, had given great occasion *to the Enemies of the Lord to blaspheme.* 2 Sam. 12. 14. And the same Enemies, (I mean the *Heathens*) do still Blaspheme our *God* and the *Lord Jesus Christ*, upon the account of those and the like Enormities and Abominations, which abound among us who call our selves His Servants, and do profess to worship Him: For by these things they cannot be perswaded that He is the *True GOD*, more than these they serve; and are tempted to think as well of their *false gods* and *petty Deities.* Some tell us, that in some places it is ordinary for People, when their honesty and integrity is called in question, to vindicate themselves by swearing and professing they are no *Christians*; which is a most horrid shame and disgrace to us and our holy Profession. It is well known what a contempt and reproach the *Spaniards* brought upon the *Christian Religion*, when they first discovered *America*, the poor *Indians* saw their Covetuousness so exorbitant, their Cruelty so horrid, and all their Practices so filthy and abominable, that they could not but loath and disgust them, and upon that account they abhorred the *God* whom they adored, and the Religion which they professed; and one of them peremptorily refused *to go to Heaven because the* Spaniards *said*

they were to be there: For he could not think that a good place into which such bad persons were admitted. And now tell me, I pray you, what can be imagined more offensive and displeasing unto GOD, than the making him lyable to be thus Blasphem'd and evil thought of? That He should be thought a Friend to, and favourer of the most wicked and wretchedly debaucht persons. Sure, the Wounds which our *SAVIOUR* receiv'd upon the *Cross* were neither so deep nor so sore, as those which such Reproaches give Him; and we may be sure He will resent it. The Wounds He receiv'd upon the *Cross* He suffered willingly, but these are against His will; The first He forgave clearly, for they made for His Honour and Glory: But we cannot think He will forgive the other, which cast such a staine upon His Holiness and Purity. *He that despised Moses Law died without Mercy, under three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment suppose ye shall He be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of GOD, who hath crucified Him a-fresh, and put Him to open shame, who hath counted the blood of the Covenant wherewith He was sanctified an unholy thing, and done despite unto the Spirit of Grace? Know ye not that Vengeance belongeth unto the Lord, and that He hath said, He will recompense it.* Heb. 10. 28.

But Thirdly, and Lastly, when these who call themselves *Christians* deny *obedience to Christ* and

and instead of doing His Will, do the contrary, obey Sin, and the lusts of the Flesh; I say this is prejudical to his *Interest*, and obstructs the *Advancement of His Kingdom* in the World; It doth both keep it from being further Extended, and also from arriving to its true hight where it is established. *Evil Communication corrupts good manners*; and one Wicked perverse Servant may debauch the rest, draw them from their Service and the Faithful and punctual attendance upon their *Master*: So a very few Persons professing the *Name of Christ*, but careless to do *His Will*, may have a very bad influence upon other Disciples. This tendeth to beget in them a perswasion, that they may belong to Christ, though they be Wedded to the World, slaves to their lusts, and drowned in sensual delights. Ever since the *Church-doors beeame so patent*, that one might have the *Name* and *Rank of* a *Christian*, without giving proofs of a *Sincere Conversion*, or shewing the Testimonies of an holy and *upright Life*, all Zeal and Care for Serving of GOD, have been very much cool'd and slacked; And ever since too, Religion hath been at a stand, and made no further progress in the World. While those who call themselves *Christians* made their light to shine before Men, whilst their good works and Holy Life were clearly seen, many Embraced our *Holy Faith* and glorified *our Heavenly Father*: The Holy

and Innocent lives of the *Apostles*, and *Primitive Christians*, were so taking, that it allured the World, and made Men Ambitious and Desirous to *Embrace that Religion*, which Taught and Enabled People to live so well: But now that the lives of *Christians* are so mean and sordid, so corrupt and profane, no Body enquires after *our Religion*, they search not into the truth and certainty thereof; They neither concern themselves about its *Author*, nor do they enquire what *Advantages* it offers beyond the other Religions of the World. The wickedness of *Christians* has drawn a bar upon the progress of Christianity, by raising & nourishing such prejudices in those who are strangers to it, so that it is now a very rare thing to see on leave his *Native Superstition*, and come over to *Embrace Christ* and His *Worship*. Perhaps there are more *Apostates* and *Renegadoes* from *Christianity* than there are *Converts* to it: And however the one is as ordinary as the other.

And now having seen what evils flow from a *Bare barren Profession*, and a *Noncomplyance* with the *Precepts* and *Laws of Jesus Christ*, how insolent it is in it self, what dishonour it brings to our *Lord*, and what a prejudice it is to *His Interest* in the World, I say when we consider this, we need not wonder why He should so sharply reprove and inveigh against it as he doth here in our Text: Certainly He hath all reason to do so, and *we His Ministers* can-

not

not be answerable if we neglect to expostulate with those who are guilty of this fault. And O, how few among us can plead not guilty! Let me use a little freedom with you, be not angry if I ask, (would to *God* you would seriously ask your selves) *what you are, what you Profess*, in whom you do believe? I know what the answer will be, all will say, *we are Christians*, we Profess, and believe in the *Lord Jesus Christ*, but I pray, how do ye shew it? What signs and proofs give ye thereof? Can you make out this by the *Works of Obedience*? Is it evident that ye do these things which he saith? If so, you have all reason to call *Him Lord*, and you speak but the truth when you call your selves *His Disciples*, but not otherwise. Be not deceived, think not *External Baptism*, *keeping the Church*, *hearing Sermons*, or *Making Prayers*, are sufficient for holding the *Dignity* and *Privitedge* of *Christians*, or for laying Claim and Title to the *Lord Jesus Christ*: Indeed they are not *Christians* who cannot shew these, but they may have them & yet not belong unto Christ; The veriest *Hypocrites* may come this length, and such as Christ will never owne in the *great day* of *His appearance*: For certainly He will reckon none His Disciples, nor will He *reward any as such*, but those who heartily and sincerely obey Him. *I know my Sheep*, saith He, and that we may know them too, He tells who they are, *my Sheep*, saith He, *hear*

my

my voice and they follow Me. John 10. 27. Now can you say, that you have hearkned sincerely to the voice of this *Sheepherd*? Have you followed whither he leadeth you? Have you indeed performed the Commandment of this *your Lord*? O that you could all answer affirmatively. But then as *Samuel* said to *Saul*, *what meaneth this Bleating of the Sheep in mine Ears, and the lowing of the Oxen which I hear*? What means the ridiculing, of the Doctrine, and mysteries of the Gospel? What mean the Taunts and Scoffs cast upon its precepts? How comes Sin and Iniquity to abound so much? Why does lust so much reign and prevail? What mean your Oaths and your Curses, your rash and Idle speeches, your slandering and your backbiting, your Wrath, Malice, and Bitter envyings, your Covetousness and Uncharitableness? Whence is it that Whoredom and Uncleanness, Gluttony and Drunkenness, Pride and Wantonness, falshood and dishonesty abound so much and are so frequent? Have you thus corrupted your selves, and do you yet presume to call upon the *name of the Lord*? *Know ye not, that every one that Nameth the Name of Christ, must depart from iniquity*; 2. *Tim.* 2. 19. Or do you think these but the spots of Children? You are mistaken, they are not the spots of Children, they are not consistent with the sincere Belief and Profession of *Christ*, they who *love him*, will not be guilty of them:

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for they bewray a contempt of Him and His Gospel, and occasion it to be evil spoken of by others. It is Zeall for *God* and charity to Men. It is self denyal and inocency, purity and an universial Holiness, it's Fruitfulness in all manner of good works which only can shew us to be true Disciples of *Christ*: These are the badges of Christianity, who putteth on these is a Christian indeed; But he who lacketh and despiseth these, he who hath neither Love nor Regard unto them, may renounce the Profession. Let me intreat you therefore to examine and trie your hearts, and when you have done that, declare your Sentiments & Resolutions. Why do you halt and hover so much? Speake your mind freely, be plain and ingenuous. Are you for *God*? will you accept *Jesus Christ* to be your *Lord* and *Master*? Declare it and let it be seen by your Works and Conversation? If you think Him a hard *Master*, one who impoles a burthen you canno: endure; If you think His Laws grievous, rigid and severe, I pray you give up with Him, quite His Service, and go serve some other Lord. For, why do you stay with Him you cannot serve? Why do you owne Him you resolve not to Obey? Why do you take on with that Master whom you cannot agree with, and with whose will and pleasure you can never comply? You who are Covetous and Wedded to the World, why come

you

you to Him who teacheth and Commands so undervalue and trample upon all *Sublunary Enjoyments*? You Proud and Vain-glorious, why do you engage with a *Master*, who is Humble and Lowly, and who requires all His Servants to be so? You who are Malicious and Disdainful, and ready upon every occasion to slight and contemne others, how can you take upon you to be the Servants of Him who is Meek and Affable, and who will have all his Servants to be kindly affectioned one towards another? You who are easily blown up to Wrath, and who cannot sit with any injury without revenging it, what a presumption is it for you to become His Disciples who strictly Commands, the *Loving of Enemies, the Blessing them that Curse us, the doing Good to them that hate us, and the praying for them that Persecute and Spitefully use us?* What reason have you, who Wrong, Cheat, and Defraud your Brethren, to Engage with *Jesus Christ* who hath established this as a certain Law amongst His Disciples, that *every one do as they would be done to*? Finally you who cannot be weaned from excess in Eating and Drinking, and voluptuous pleasures, from profane jesting and filthy Communication, from licentious and ungodly Practises, I say why do you call *Christ* your *Lord*? Why pretend you to His Service seeing you know that he hates and hath discharged all these things, and has enjoin'd

that

that we *be Holy in all manner of converſation, even as He Himſelf who hath called us is Holy.* What think you? Doth *Chriſt* only require a large Muſter-roll? Doth He ask only that Men liſt themſelves under Him? is He content they *Serve Him* by halfs only, or think you *He* will be pleaſed that inſtead of doing His own will they do the quite contrary? If therefore you have no mind to comply with the will of *Chriſt*, that is, to be truly Juſt and *Honeſt*, Sober, and Temperate, good and Merciſull, holy and upright before *GOD* and *Man*: You had better not owne *Chriſt*, not pretend to have any thing a do with Him; Otherwiſe you ſhall draw greater guilt and Puniſhment upon your ſelves: for you have ſeen how much this doth provoke Him, and what diſhonour and prejudice it doth to Him.

It is our proper buſineſs, and the proper buſineſs of this place, to perſwade Men to embrace *Chriſt*, and to be reconciled unto *God*; we are ſent out upon this very Errand, but if Men will not be perſwaded to leave their Sins, nor to turn Holy and Righteous, we muſt intreat them not to embrace *Chriſt*; we muſt deſire them to profeſs *Atheiſme*, *Infidelity*, any thing they pleaſe except the *Chriſtian Religion*: And ſure, next to a hearty and real Complyance with the Laws of the Goſpel, this is the beſt Service can be done unto *God*; For ſo long as Men deny *Chriſt*, and

will

will not owne themſelves to be His Diſciples, their Fruitfulneſs in Sin, and their Barrenneſs in Good Works, diſappoint neither *God* nor Man, nor is the occaſion of any reproach unto the *Chriſtian Religion*. But when Men call themſelves *Chriſtians*, it is ſtill expected they will walk as ſuch; while they call unto *Chriſt*, *Lord*, *Lord*, its hoped and believed they will do what He ſaith: Even as *Chriſt* looked to have found Figs upon the Tree which brought forth leaves; and therefore, if this Fruit be wanting in them, they both mock *God* and delude Men. And *will ye thus requite the Lord, ye fooliſh people and unwiſe?* Will ye mock and deal deceitfully with Him, who hath done ſo many and ſo great things for you? If ye do Him no Good, I pray you, do Him no Wrong, If you will not Glorifie Him by your Good Works, I pray you, do not Diſhonour Him by your Evil Deeds If ye will not ſerve Him your ſelves, do not hinder others that would: His Love, the laying down of His Life for you, ought to melt you into Love, and to engage you to Obedience; but if you think Him not worthy of ſuch a Return, I hope you will not think it juſt, to render Him Evil for Good, Hatred for Love: He deſerves better uſage at your Hands, than to have His Spirit Wounded and Grieved by you, His Name Reproached and Calumniated, and His Intereſt Weakned and Prejudged. And yet all

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these things ye do unto Him when ye call Him *Lord*, and do not these things which He saith. Oh, far be it from us to be guilty of such monstruous Ingratitude, and to deal so inhumanely with the *Lord Jesus Christ*, who hath shewed us such astonishing Love and Kindness, and who is most desirous of our good and happiness: Wherefore let us sit down, and deliberate what we will do, whether we will adhere to the Profession of *Christ*, and joyn thereto Obedience to His Laws, or if we shall renounce both together; the first certainly would please Him best, but the second would please Him better than a bare barren Profession of His Name with the practice of Sin and Wickedness. Chuse you then this day, whom ye will serve, whether *Christ* the *Lord*, or the Devil, the World, and and the Flesh? Ye cannot serve Him and them too: *No Man can serve two Masters.* If you cleave to Him, you must forsake them: If you will adhere to them, let Him go. I know you will answer as the People did *Josua*, when he put the like question unto them, *GOD forbid that we should forsake the Lord to serve other gods.* But remember and consider what *Josua* said again unto them, *Ye cannot serve the Lord, for He is an holy God, He is a jealous God, He will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins*, That is, He will not connive at them, or bear with them; He will by no means be induced to indulge you

you the practice of them, *If ye forsake the Lord and serve strange gods*, that is, if while you profess your selves His Servants, you obey any other and do any thing which is evil in His sight, *Then He will turn and do you hurt, and consume you after that He hath done you good.* Jos. 24. 16. Lay your hand therefore to heart, and resolve either to part with your Sins, or with Him whom you call your *Lord.* But what, shall sin separate us from *God*? Shall any thing be dearer to us than the *Lord Jesus Christ*? Have we greater Ties to the Devil, the World, and the Flesh, than to Him? Shall we think our selves happier in their Service than in His? *God* forbid, was it not by these that we were brought into misery aud thraldom? Shal we deliberate than to whom we shall yeeld our selves Servants, *whether of Sin*, or *of obedience unto Righteousness*? Is the ballance equall? Is there not more weight on the one side than the other? Why then do we not chuse, why do we not preferr that which Reason, Interest, and Duty perswade to! *What fruit hav eye in these things whereof you are now ashamed, is not the end of these things Death? For the wages of Sin is Death, but the gift of* God *is Eternall Life, through* Jesus Christ *our Lord. Let not therefore sin reign any more in your Mortal Bodies, that ye should more obey it in the lusts thereof neither yeeld ye your Members as Instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but your Members as Instruments of Righteousness unto* God. Be not afraid

afraid or discouraged at His Laws, for *there is none of them grievous*, saith the Apostle St. John. *The Law of the Lord is perfect*, (saith *David*) *Converting the Soul, His statutes are right, rejoicing the Heart, they are more to be desired than Gold; yea, than much fine Gold, sweeter also than Honey or the Honey-comb; And in keeping them there is great reward.* Psal 19. For if being made free from Sin, we become Servants to *God*, and have our Fruit unto Holiness, our end shall be everlasting Life; To the which *God* bring us all, in His Good time. *AMEN.*

The

The THIRD SERMON ON *REVELATION*, 2 Chap. 17 Verſ.

He that hath an Ear, let him hear what the Spirit ſaith unto the Churches: To him that overcometh, will I give to eat of the hidden Manna; and will give him a white ſtone, and in the ſtone a new name written, which no Man knoweth, ſaving he that receiveth it.

THESE words were firſt directed to the Church of *Pergamus*, but they were not intended for that Church only, for every one is required to give ear to them. We have all the ſame Vocation, the ſame obligations are on us, and the ſame rewards are propoſed to us, and therefore likewayes we are all tyed to the ſame Duty. The different Stations and Orders of the Church, do indeed call for ſome difference in Perſons Behaviour, but otherwayes all *Chriſtians* have the ſame Task enjoyned them, and what is ſpoken to one, is ſpoken to all.

The

The first thing here called for, is an attention to the Voice of GOD a listning to what His Spirit saith unto us. *Let him who hath an ear hear*, &c, So likewayes began the Law and the Prophets for their usual Preface, was, *Hear O Israel.* Hearing may be a sign of a ready and willing mind, and is necessary to prepare the way to these other Acts and Exercises required of us. It is indeed neither the only, nor the main thing we have to do, and therefore, they who are only Hearers deceive themselves; As St. *James* speaks *chap.* 1 22. As the Body would be Deformed if it were all *Ear*, so that Mans Religion is misshapen, which is wholy exercised in hearing. But however hearing is necessary, it must not swallow up all other Parts of the *Christian* Service; But neither must it be Slighted and Neglected. He who turns away his Ear and will not hear shews an averseness to his Duty, & though he would set himself to it, he could not go rightly about it, for all our knowledge of Spiritual things, come by hearing: This is not to be fetcht from within, and therefore he who heareth not must continue in grose Ignorance. We should begin with hearing, and we should never cease to hear, that we may be informed of our *Lords will*, that we may be kept in mind of it, & finally quickned to it, As Servants wait daily on their Masters to know their Pleasure and to receive their

Commands, so should we wait on *God*. *I will* saith the Psalmist, *hear what* God *the* Lord *will* speak. This is every ones Duty, none are Exempted from it: Not the Ignorant to be sure, nor yet he who thinks he hath knowledge; The Man of leisure & he who is retired from the World can pretend no excuse, nor will the Man of business be excused if he neglect to hear: As many as have Ears and faculties to perceive are Obliged and Commanded to hear, for the words of our Text are, *Let him who hath ears*, which certainly comprehendeth all and every one.

But as we are obliged to hear, so we ought to take head, *How we hear*, as it is *Luke* 8. 18. That we hear aright else we need not hear at all. Now he hears not rightly who lets only the voice or the sound of the word strike his Ear: But who suffers it to pierce thorrow to his mind and inner Man, & to leave an impression there. Wherefore as we must hear, so we ought to have our ears well purg'd of what ever may stop what is spoken from going to the ear, or hinder its working there: For the hearing here required is, *opus animi non auris*; Its a *pondering* with the mind as well as a hearkning with the Ear. Wherefore as S. *James* adviseth, we ought to *lay aside Prejudice and Filthiness and all Superfluity of Naughtiness, and to receive with Meekness the ingrafted Word of* God. And sure none can refuse this who considers either the

the dignity of him who speaks, or the excellency of what is spoken: He who speaks is greater then *Socrates* or *Plato*, or any of the antient Philosophers, whom many travelled far to meet with; He is greater then *Solomon*, whom the Queen of *Sheba* was so desirous to hear. And what is delivered doth not tickle the fansie, but satisfieth and ravisheth the mind; Its not airy notions, and fruitless Speculations which we are, bid hear but a *Word which is able to save our Souls.*

And that we may hear this *joyful & comfortable word*, we must not listen to the dictats of our corrupt nature nor to the maximes of a degenerate World, nor to the Traditions of Elders: For these do often misguid us, and thô sometimes they seem to speake fair, yet they only flatter that they may the better deceive and ensnare us, to make void the Commandments of *God*. neither the clamours of the People, nor the calls of the Court are alwayes to be hearkned to; For the Psalmist tells us that both the one, and the other have, sometimes Consulted and Conspired *against the* Lord, *and against his* Christ, *Psal.* 2. We must not answer every voice, nor *believe every spirit*, for there be many lying and false Spirits in the World: But we must only hearken to what the Spirit of *God* saith, and then we are sure, not to be deceived. This holy Spirit sometimes speaketh to us inwardly and would

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certainly do it oftner if we were rightly disposed, and carefull to attend, but it always Speaketh to us in the Scriptures, they are the voice of *God* which we ought to hear; *For no Scripture is of private Interpretation, neither did the Pen Men of Scripture Speak and Write of their own Head, but as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*: So then it is not Man who speaketh to us in the Scripture, but the Spirit of *God*; And seeing *God* is not like Man, that he should alter his mind, seeing his will as his Nature is unchangeable, therefore nothing is from *God* which contradicts what is said to us in the Scripture and therefore allo whatever voice we hear whither within us or without us we ought to compare the same, with what the Spirit saith to the Churches in the Scripture; If it agree therewith we have reason to believe and obey it: But if they sound not alike, if there be no harmony, but a perfect discord betwixt them, then that is not from *God*. It is but a Cheat, & Delusion which disagreeth with the Written Word, and ought to be rejected, whoever brings it. But its to be remembred that the quoting Texts of Scripture, & the speaking in Scripture termes, is not a certain signe that they who do so are true prophets, or that their Doctrine is true, and from *God* for Men may and often do wrest the Scripture, and use it Ignorantly and Impertinently. The

Devil

Devil when he tempted our *Saviour*, cited Scripture; but we ought to look to the nature and tendency of the Doctrine, and consider whether it agree to the scope of the Scripture in its particular Precepts: For that is the true Standart and Measure; *Ye shall know* (saith our *Saviour*) *the Tree by its fruit.*

Now the summ of what the Spirit saith to the Churches, and to us by the Churches in the Scripture, is what we have in the Text, *viz. To him that overcometh*, &c. In handling of which words, we shall first explain, what is meant by *overcoming*; then secondly, what is the Reward here promised to him that overcometh.

As to the first, seeing there is mention here of *overcoming*, that necessary supposeth Fighting; for there can be no Victory without Fighting; and if there must be a Fight, there must also be Enemies, for we cannot Fight, but against Enemies. And by this it appears that the Life of a *Christian* is a Warfare, and that by coming to *Christ* we become Souldiers, who are engaged to fight. Idleness and Ease is not the end of our Calling; nor are we listed meerly for shew and ostentation, for we are called to wrestle and fight, and that so stoutly and valiantly, so constantly and stedfastly until we overcome. It is not enough to begin, to make ready, and present our selves to the Battle; nor yet to Fight a while, to

hold out against two or three Onsetts, but we must never turn back, never yeild, or give over; but must hold out to the end, and so too as to carry away the Victory, for the promise is here only to him that *overcometh*. As in the *Olympick Games*, none got the Prize until he had first got the Mastery over his *Antagonists*; and as among the *Romans* a Triumph was granted not to him that had essayed the War, but to him who had come off Victorious. So *Christians* are not to expect these glorious things here proposed, unless they have not only interprised the good Fight, but gained a Victory therein. *If any man turn back*, (saith GOD) *my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But blessed is he who endureth to the end for the same shall be saved.* Heb. 10. 22.

But then you'l ask whom we are to Fight with, and after what manner? In the first place, our Text speaks not of Carnal Fighting; we are not to understand it of Mustering humane Forces, of Encamping Armies, Setting of Battles, Laying of Sieges, Making Assaults upon Cities to take them, nor of useing these, or any other stratagems of War, where there is occasion of shewing Military Art and Valour, and where only Carnall and Materiall Weapons are used. The rewards of these Earthly Victories are Glory & Renown, spoiles of the Enemies Armes, and Riches, their Ensigns and Standarts hanged up in publick

lick Places, or the Conquest of new Dominions; all which pass not the Confines of this lower World, Whereas the *Manna* and white Stone and new Name, regard the glory of the Life to come. And though doubtless there shall be some great Warriours in Heaven, Some of these great Conquerours of the World, shall also certainly Triumph with the *Lord Jesus Christ* in the last day: Yet there are many who for acquiring Kingdoms here below shall lose that above; some who pillag'd this habitable world Without check or control, and forced Men to give way to their Armies and Power are now smarting for it; Although they made their Sword, once to give Law to others; Yet now they are Judged by a more Righteous and stable Law, which condemns them of rapine and injury. But as for these Warlick Princes who have mounted Heaven, they have not gone there by their mighty Feats of Armes; But by Faith in *Jesus Christ*, and by True and Serious Repentance. And so the Enemies we are to fight with, are the Enemies of our Salvation, *viz.* The Devil, and all his instruments, and the Victory which we must carry is Spiritual over the Flesh, and the World, Sin and errour, and all their Branches: *As the Weapons of our warfare are not Carnal but Spiritual*, our shield, is the *Shield of Faith*, and our Sword is *the Sword of the Spirit*, which is *the Word of God*; So as St. *Paul* saith,

we

we wrestle not against Flesh and Blood, but against Principalities, against Powers, against the Rulers, of the Darkness of this World, against Spiritual Wickedness in high Places, Ephes. 6. 12.

More Particularly, if we do well consider these Letters to the *seven Churches*, which our *Lord* shuts up with these words, *to him that overcometh*, we shal find the Enemies He proposeth to be encountered, are such as go about to extinguish our Faith, to defile our worship, to stifle our Charity, and to stain the Purity of our *Christian life*, and Conversation: Persecutions, & trouble for the sake of the Gospel or any part of it, Idolatrie and Superstition, Heresie and false Doctrine, the Corruption and inordinate lusts within us, and the pollution, and wicked Practises of the World without us, are the things we have to strugle and wrestle with. And the *word overcome* in our Text, hath a reference to a perpetual War, which ought to be maintained against all and every one of them: For it is not enough to attack or resist stoutly any one of them, if we do not withstand all; He doth not overcome according to the Text, nor can he claim the reward promised therein, who stricks in with any one of these, or meanly yeelds to it; Though he stand never so stiffly out against the rest, as for example, He cannot be said *to overcome*; who resists errour and *false Doctrine*, and yet suffers himself to be captivated

captivated by vice or Sin, nor is he to be accounted Victorious who meets Trouble and Persecution with Courage and Undauntedness, and in the mean time is not careful to keep a sound Faith and a good conscience; It is Treachery and Cowardice to yeeld to, or make an agreement with any Enemy whatsoever.

But wherein, will you say, doth this Victory properly consist; Doth *Christ* require us to destroy the Superstitions and Idolatries of the World? to amend the Corruption of the age we live in? and to stop Persecution and Trouble which come upon the Church? For according to the usual way of speaking, he overcometh, that gets the upper hand of his Enemies and ruines them. Truly the Church of GOD should not suffer Idolatry and Superstition to creep into its worship, and should guard its Discipline and Constitutions from being vitiated, and if it were in her power to deliver her self from Persecution by wayes Just and Lawful, the motions of Nature would induce thereto, and Nature in this, is not contrary to the Gospel. But of a truth, *Christ* requires not of His Church and People, what is not in their power. GOD only can pull down the Temples consecrated to Idols, and the Idols set up in Mens Hearts, and purge the World of its corruptions, and suppress the hatred and boldness of the Enemies of the Truth,

Truth, and bind up their hands that they persecute not those who make profession thereof. But it is our own selves and not others, we are commanded to conquer. The Victory of our Text is within us, and not without. The Faithful overcome when they keep themselves from being overcome with their Enemies: Their Glory is not to succumb under any Temptation whatsoever. In War he who is attacked is overcome, if he yeild; but he who attacks is overcome, if he succeed not; to be thrust from an Enterprize; to be forced back from an Assault, is to be conquered by the Adversary; And on the contrary not to suffer this, is to carry a Glorious Victory. Even so as it is the Devil and the World who attack us, by endeavouring to draw us to the Service of false gods, by alluring us with the Bait of filthy pleasures, and by frighting us with the horrour of trouble and Persecution; so if we resist stedfastly all these Temptations and maintain a sound Faith, a pure Worship, a holy Life, and Patience until the end, we have overcome, and our Enemy seeing all his Attempts upon us thus in vain, will be constrained to retire with shame. Wherefore St *Paul* said, *He had fought the good fight, because he had kept the faith.* 2 Tim. 4. 7.

Thus you see what Enemies we are to fight with. viz. *The Devil*, *the World*, and *the Flesh*, the *Temptations to Sin and Error*, and *all the hinderances*

derances of Vertue and Holiness: And that he obtaineth a Victory over them that keepeth the Faith, and a good Conscience maugre all these oppositions. He overcometh who notwithstanding the Devils activity, and that he lives in a crooked and untowardly Generation where Sin doth abound, where Vice is more fashionable than Vertue, where Error and false Teners prevail, and the Truth is born down, and perhaps persecuted. I say he overcometh, who notwithstanding of this adheres to the Truth, neither swerves from the Belief, nor Profession thereof, but continues constant to both. He overcometh who carefully keeps himself unspotted from the world, and who walketh straightly in the wayes of GOD, sincerely obeying whatsoever is His will and pleasure. Finally, he overcometh, who waits chearfully upon GOD, and preserves a firm patience of mind, notwithstanding his own trouble, or the afflictions of other Godly persons, and the success and prosperity of the Wicked. And as this is to overcome in the sense of our Text; so he who thus overcometh gains a noble and a most glorious Victory. All other Victories are nothing so desireable as this; nor doth any Victory over any Enemy whatsoever, speak out such Wisdom and Valour as this doth. It is more Glorious to overcome the Devil, than to subdue Men or Beasts, and it requires greater Art

and

and Valour to oppose his Assaults, and to render his devices ineffectual, than to resist the Armies of Men, or to defeat the boldest and most cunning Stratagem of War. There is really more Wisdom and Courage shown in mortifying Lust, the bridling a Passion, and the resisting the Temptations to Sin and Error wherewith the World abounds, than in defending or taking a City, the scaling of Walls, the venturing thorow the Enemies Forces, combating wild beasts, or in any of these Acts whereby Men ordinarly gain Renown: for who have been strong and able enough, for the last have been tooweak for the first. The *Alexanders*, *Cæsars*, *Antonies*, and other famed *Heros*, have oft been led captive by silly Women, they wanted Courage to resist the charms of Beauty, or to encounter with Affronts, Disgrace, or other Disastures. The Saints and Martyrs are more illustrious for their Patience, Constancie, contempt of the World, and severe Vertue, then all the renowned warriours for their Victories and Conquests. *He that is slow to anger is better then the mighty, and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that ruleth a city*, saith *Solomon*, *Pro.* 16. 32. These *Heroick Acts* so much spoken of in History, are perhaps as much to be ascribed to a hardy temper of body, as to true Magnanimity of Spirit; and Mens success proceeds more from what we call Fortune or good Luck,

Luck, or to ſpeak more agreeable to the principles of Chriſtianity, to ſome favourable juncture and concurrence of *Providence*, then to their own Valour and Prudence. But this ſpiritual Victory can never be carried on without the knowledge of the Truth, and acquaintance with *true wiſdom*, and a *ſettled undaunted reſolution*: Wherefore this Victory is certainly moſt preferable, it is moſt to be gloried in, and there is more praiſe and honour due to it, and alſo it is attended with a greater Reward, which leads us to the conſideration of what remains in the Text;

I will give to eat of the hidden Manna.

This is an alluſion to that uſual cuſtom of feaſting Conquerours and ſucceſful Warriours. As they who gain Earthly Victories uſe to be treated ſumptuouſly: So the Lord *Jeſus* gives us here to underſtand, that He will make an honourable Intertainment to ſuch as obtain the Spiritual Victory formerly mentioned; He will feaſt him that overcometh, with great excellent and deſireable delights. What is to be ſet before them is here named *Manna*, with a reference to what the Children of *Iſrael* fed upon in the Wilderneſs, by giving it the Name of *Manna*, either the excellent nature and quality of this fair here promiſed is ſet forth, or thereby the fair and matter of the Entertainment it ſelf is particularly pointed at. Firſt, hereby is ſet forth the excellent nature

nature and quality of this Feast and Entertainment, that it is Heavenly: For as *Manna* was not produced out of the ground like other grain, but came down immediatly from Heaven: So what satisfaction is designed for our Souls, is not grounded upon Earthly possessions. It ariseth not from these outward and sensible things, but flows meerly from GOD, and is the result of an immediate fellowship with him. Which farther makes out the solidity and purity of this Joy and Delight. For Earthly pleasures are built on things vain, brittle, and which daily fade, wherefore they are not true and solid Pleasures, they are rather but shadowes of Pleasure; But the joy and Pleasure of the Text coming directly from *God* Himself, it therefore must be most firme and solid. And as for Earthly Delights and Entertainments they are not pure, they have all some allay in them, some mixture of what doth disgust and displease, as every ones experience Witnesseth: But no such thing is to be found in that Entertainment which is from Heaven, because all things there are Pure and Perfect. Again as *Manna* was not only good for food, but pleasant to the taste, the Scripture saith, *it tasted like Honey*, and the *Jewes* have a tradition, that it answered every Mans taste, that is, it relisht according to each Mans particular appetite, affording every one that satisfaction in his taste which pleased Him

Him best: So the joy afforded us upon the gaining this Spiritual Victory shall be most ravishing, it shall fully answear all the desires of our Souls, and shall yeeld us that full Satisfaction they would be at, wherefore it is called a joy unspeakeable and full of glory, and our *Lord* tells us, that they who taste thereof shal not Hunger or Thirst any more; *Whosoever shal drink of this water shall thirst again, but whosoever shal Drink of this water that I shal give him shall never Thirst.* Joh. 4. 13. Moreover as there was Plenty of *Manna*, so this Heavenly joy shall not be laid upon us in narrow & scanty measures, but it shall flow and abound beyond all expression. Therefore it is said in Scripture *to pass all understanding*, that is, the height and greatness thereof can never be Sufficiently comprehended; finally, as *Manna* was permanent, it lasted all the while the Children of *Israel* were in the Wilderness, that is, so long as they needed it, neither was it possible for their Enemies to hinder it; So this joy shall never cease, our Enemies malice & power cannot reach it, but it abideth for ever: All earthly goods are lyable to rapine & violence our Enemies may bereave us of them: but they cannot take *away the consolations of the Spirit of God* here, these we may enjoy in the midst of Bonds and Imprisonment and afflictions, and much less can any stay that joy, and these Pleasures which shall be bestowed hereafter.

And

And as these are the reasons why the joy prepared for those who overcome is called *Manna*, so it is called *hidden Manna*, alluding to the Pot of *Manna* laid up in the *Ark*, or else because the Nature and Quality and Excellence of this Joy is without the reach of sense: Our Bodily Sense, do not discern it, nor can Humane Reason scan it. *Strangers do not intermedle with this joy.* None understand it but they who possess it. *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard; neither have entred into the heart of Man, the good things which God hath laid up for them that love him.*

But I said by *Manna*, not only are set forth the Nature and Quality of these delights he *who overcometh* is to be feasted with; but also that the particular fair pointed at, which is the ground and matter of such *excellent joy* and Delight. And therefore by *Manna* here we are to understand *Jesus Christ* Himself, for *Manna* was a Type and Figure of Him, and He is expressly called *Spiritual Manna. 1 Cor.* 10. 3. And as a Pot of *Manna* was laid up in the Ark, so *Jesus Christ* is kept and reserved in the Heavens, which were figured by the Ark; And therefore he is called *hidden Manna*. Now they who overcome shall be feasted upon Christ, not after a corporal and carnal manner, eating his Flesh, and drinking his blood, as some senseless dream, they do in the Sacrament of the *Lords Supper*; not yet Sacramentally as we

we use to do in this World, in the Elements of Bread and Wine: For hereafter in Heaven which is here pointed at, there is neither place for, nor need of Types, Figures, and *Symbols*, they would be too gross fare for such a pure state. But the meaning is, they shall be feasted on His Merits, the Fruits of His Incarnation, Birth, Life, Death, Resurrection, Ascension, Intercession, and of what ever He did and suffered; all these shall be liberally bestowed on him that overcometh, he shall be made to share of them to the full: *My flesh* (saith Christ) *is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. Io.* 6. 55. There is no proper Food but this. He who wants this is utterly miserable; for nothing besides this, can give life or pleasure to the Soul of Man: that Soul must necessarly perish which is not so fed; and who is so intertained cannot be but happy: For all matter of Sadness and Grief is removed, and all matter of Delight, Joy, and desireable Satisfaction is given and secured to him, as will appear by what follows, which is the effect of this Intertainment: He who gets to Eat of this *bidden Manna*, shall also get *a white Stone.*

When St. *John* had this *Revelation* he was in *Patmos*, an *Isle* in the *Egean* or *Egarean* Sea, & here he alludes to a custome practised or well known there; For in *Asia*, and other *Eastern* Countries they were wont to give their Votes,

for Acquitting or Condemning such as were accused by casting *White* and *Black Shells*, or *Stones*; the *White* as an emblem of *Innocency*, was for the Persons *Absolution* and *Justification*, as *the Black* betokened *Guilt*, and declared for their *Condemnation*, which *Ovid* has thus delivered;

Mos erat antiquis niveis atrisq; Capillis,
His damnare reos illis absolvere culpa.

By the *Whyte Stone* then is meant a *Sentence of absolution* and so our *Saviour* here Promiseth, to absolve and Justifie such as overcome, from all that may be laid to their Charge: He will take away their *Guilt*, *wash them from their Sins*, and deliver them from the *Death* that is due to them. And O what a happiness is this! what matter of joy is there in *this promise*? it is as health to the *Sick*, ransome to the *Captive*, and a remission to him who is ready to be led forth to the Execution. If any be not affected herewith, it is because they are not sensible of their guilt, and do not consider the Heinous nature of Sin, or the Misery which attends it; But who have laid this to Heart will prize it exceedingly. What would a troubled Conscience give for the least assurance or smallest hope of this Comfort? O *Who will deliver me from this Body of Death*, saith *St. Paul*, *Rom.* 7. 28. And *David*, *who roared all the day long because of his Sin*; And on that account found GODS Hand day and night heavy upon him, cryes out, *Blessed is he whose transgression*

greſſion is forgiven, whoſe Sin is covered. Bleſſed is the Man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity; Pſal. 32. 1. Deſpair not becauſe thy Sins are many and great, for be they never ſo Numerous or Heinous, *Chriſt is able to take them away*, and here He promiſes to abſolve thee. Be of good chear, O Sinner thy Sin ſhall be forgiven thee, for there is *now no Condemnation to them that are in Chriſt Jeſus, who walk not after the Fleſh, but after the Spirit*; Rom. 8. 1.

But there is here promiſed not only a *White Stone* the *ſigne of abſolution*, and a *Deliverance* from *Death* due to us, but alſo ſomething more, which we could never deſerve, and which exceeds all expreſſion. In the *Stone* there ſhall be a *New Name*, which is ſtill an alluſion to the Cuſtom of theſe former times, and *Eaſtern Countries*, where Letters and Words uſed to be Writen alſo upon the Stones, they caſt into the publick urne. What is the importance of this *New Name*, we will know when we have found out whoſe Name it is, whither of him who gives it, or of him who receives it? In the following Chapter, verſe, 12. There is expreſs mention of *Chriſts new Name*: By which we are to underſtand the New, clear, full and Perfect Manifeſtation of the Truth, and Importance of *His Name, Jeſus Chriſt*, for as when *God* appeared to *Moſes Exod.* 6. 3. He called *Jehova a new Name*, not known to the *Patri-*

archs, becauſe he executed the promiſe made to them, and ſo manifeſted his Faithfulneſs and unchangeableneſs ſignified by that *Name*: for otherwiſe it cannot be ſaid, but that this particular Name was known before as well as that of *Almighty*; So becauſe hereafter there ſhal be a clear diſcovery of the ſignification of *Jeſus Chriſt*, and of the truth of that ſignification, becauſe the *Salvation* and *Redemption* implyed in this *Name*, ſhall be fully revealed, therefore it is called His *New Name*. At preſent we call *Him Jeſus Chriſt* or *Lord*, but hereafter we ſhall See & Feell Him effectually to be ſo; Now the *Salvation* He hath purchaſed, is the *Object of our hope*, but then we ſhall behold it with our Eyes, and made to Contemplate the Glory of His Kingdome, to our unſpeakeable Comfort and Satisfaction. But ſeeing it is ſaid *a new name*, & not *my new name*, therefore it would ſeem that we are to underſtand it of the name of him who receives it; and ſeing Names are the marks of things, & are often taken ſo in Scripture, therefore by *new name* we ought to underſtand the *new ſtate* and *condition* which the *Saints*, and whom GOD honoureth, ſhall be put into. The Name given to the firſt Man was *Adam*, and it is common to us all, for it ſheweth our Original and Condition to be earthly, we *came from the Duſt and to the Duſt we muſt return*, our preſent ſtate is corruptible and makes us lyable

able to Death; the Immortality Man would have had in *Paradiſe*, if he had continued his Integrity, would not been the effect of his natural force, but of a ſupernatural vertue; for the natural compoſition of our Body tends to corruption. But when this corruptible ſtate is done away, there ſhall ſucceed another better ſtate, even an *Heavenly* and Incorruptible one, which is implyed by this *new name*. *As is the earthy, ſuch are they alſo that are earthy, and as is the heavenly, ſuch are they alſo, that are heavenly; And as we have born the image of the earthy, we ſhall alſo bear the image of the heavenly, for this corruptible muſt put on incorruption, and this mortal, muſt put on immortality.* 1 Cor. 18. 48, 58.

There remains no more to be explained, but the very laſt words of the Text, the ſenſe of which ſeems not to be very obvious, for if the *whiteſtone* and *new name* be to be underſtood of our *Juſtification* & *Glorification*, as I have ſaid, how then can it be ſaid, that *no man knoweth it, but he who receiveth it*? For will not our Abſolution be pronounced before all the World, is not GOD to juſtifie us in the *General Aſſembly of Angels and Men*? Will not the Devil and Damned behold the Saints entrance into Glory, which will not a little aggravate their miſery; The *Triumph of Jeſus Chriſt* is too Glorious to be concealed, and the Glory which He will beſtow on His *Faithful Servants*, is too Splendid to be hid. But to this it may be re-

plied, First, That indeed the matter of this Joy and Glory may and will be known unto others, but none except those who posses it, can have a true sense of it, or understand it. The *Sentence* of our *Absolution* shall indeed be pronounced before all the World: The Wicked, yea, the Devils themselves, shall hear these blessed words, which proceed from our *Saviour's Mouth*, *Come, ye Blessed of My Father, inherite the Kingdom prepared for you*; But none save those to whom they are spoken shall understand, or comprehend the fulness of the *Consolation*, which they give. The outside of Mens condition may be seen, & the external matter of their happiness may be known, but no view of things can make any taste, the sweetness of them, or sensible of the delectation which they afford, any who hath the use of reason may perswade himself, that the state of the Saints in Heaven, will be Magnificent and Glorious, even to Admiration: But without the actual possession of that state, it is simply impossible to conceive, or to have any true *sensation of the Joy*, and *Delectableness* thereof; as none can have a *true Idea* of the Beauty of *Colours*, or the Harmony of *Musick*, or the the Sweetness of *Nectar*, and *Ambrosia*, but by Seeing, Hearing, and Tasting them. Notwithstanding of what has been revealed of Heaven, St. *John* saith, *It doth not yet appear what we shall be.* But 2*dly*, some put another gloss upon the words, and considering that they

they run in the preſent Tenſe, and not in the future, for it is, *None knoweth it but he that receiveth*, and not, none ſhal know, but he that ſhall receive: Therefore they conclude, that the Receiving and Knowledge meant of, relates to ſomething in this *preſent Life*, and not to that which *is to come*; and that ſo the meaning muſt be, that none at preſent knoweth theſe things, or has any ſenſe or apprehenſion of them, but they who have received by the *Grace* and *Spirit of GOD*, an earneſt of them; that they are *unintelligible Myſteries* to all, except to them who believe. None other do regard them, or are ſenſible of the worth of them. As the *Croſs of Chriſt* is a Stumbling-block to the *Jews*, and Fooliſhneſs to the *Greeks*; ſo the Glory and the Happineſs of the *other Life*, are reckoned Dreams and Raveries by the Men of the World, who are void of Faith; whereas Faith both diſcovers the certainty, & alſo gives ſome fore-taſte of the unſpeakable excellency thereof, *For faith is the ſubſtance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not ſeen*, Heb. 11. 1. As GOD gave *Moſes* a ſight of the Land of *Canaan*, on the top of *Piſgah*, ſo *Chriſtians* by Faith have a ſweet and deſireable Proſpect of Heaven, and the Happineſs of the other World. It not only aſſures them that there is ſuch a thing, but alſo makes them ſenſible that it excelleth all the Delights and Enjoyments under the Sun, that nothing in this

this World is worthy to be compared unto that which is to be revealed. As Faith is the chief Weapon and Inſtrument to be uſed in gaining this *Spiritual Victory*; ſo it aſcertains us of our Reward, and convinceth us of the greatneſs thereof. If we have *Faith*, we ſhall eaſily *Overcome*, and alſo be fully perſwaded that our labour ſhall not be in vain.

Do you Believe? I hope you do, why then ſit you ſtill? Why go you not out to *Fight the Battles of the Lord?* Ariſe I pray you, and prove your ſtrength and valour againſt His Enemies, and your own; they are now buſie, and there is no truce to be granted unto them. Beſtirr your ſelves therefore, ſuffer them not to catch any advantage over you, but be ſure to carry away the Victory. *If the Devil aſſault you, reſiſt him till he flee from you.* Are you perſecuted, troubled, and afflicted? maintain a *Chriſtian Courage*, and *Magnaminity*, bear all with an invincible Patience, and ſuffer the utmoſt, rather than do what is diſhonourable, what may offend GOD, or wound your own Conſcience. Doth the wind of falſe Doctrine blow from all quarters, let us take heed that we be not carried away therewith; let us ſearch for the Truth, and never ſuffer lies and falſehoods to have any Impreſſion upon us. And that other errors may not find entrance, let us ſhut out that great and groſs *one*, & the *Mother of many*. *viz.* That it is no matter what Men think

think or believe, that Opinions are not dangerous, for the Apoſtle tells us, that there is ſome *Hereſies damnable*. All Truths are not to be alike accounted of, nor are all Errors dangerous: But certainly ſome Truths are of ſuch importance, and are delivered with ſuch evidence, that to deny or queſtion them, is to reſiſt GOD and queſtion *His Veracity*; and there are ſome Errors which debauch the underſtanding as much as Vice doth the Heart, and the one doth alienate from GOD, as well as the other. If we be tempted to mingle our Devotions with Idolatry and Superſtition, that the Worſhip of GOD may be ſplendid and magnificent; let us not yeild, for GOD is not to be Worſhiped with that which pleaſeth him not, nor muſt we ſtudy to Honour Him by wayes which He has forbidden. Neither out of a pretext of ſhunning this, let us be carried to the other extreme of Indecency, Irreverence, and of a naſty Familiarity. Whatever be in vogue among others, let us both in publick and in private keep up that Worſhip which is grave, ſerious, and deliberate, which is ſuitable to the Majeſty of GOD, and proper to beget in us great and worthy thoughts of Him; which kindleth our Love to Him, heighteneth our Reverence and Eſteem for Him, which inſtructs us in His Will, and quickeneth our Obedience to His Commands. Finally, and particularly, let us with all care

eſcape

escape the *Polution* that is in the World, thorow Lust; let us stave off Vice, and withstand the wicked Practices of this Age we live in, and study to be found the Children of GOD without all rebuke even in the midst of a *crooked & perverse generation*, whatever be the practices of others, let us make it our business to *deny ungodliness & Worldly lusts, & to live soberly, Righteously, & Godly, in this present World, looking for the blessed hope, and glorious appearance of the Son of GOD.* If we do not strive to *Overcome* in this last Particular, our Victory in the rest will be to little purpose. What will it availe us to stand out against *Persecutions*, to resist *Errour* and *Heresies*, *Idolatrie* and *Superstition*, if we be Slaves to lust, and suffer Sin or any manner of impiety to reign in us. All our Zeal for *Christs Kingdom* without will profite us nothing, if we do not sett it up within us. Though we *Propheſie* in *Christs Name* and in His *Name cast out Devils*, and in *His Name* do many *Wondrous Works*; Yet if we do the Works of Iniquity, He will say to us in that day, *depart from Me, I never knew you.*

Thus you have seen your task, and what as *Christians* is required of you. Your task indeed is great and if you resolve to acquitt your selves well, you must be active and diligent. There is no place for Idleness or Loittering. You have much ado but however do not despond for there shall be strength

given

given you from above. *He that is with you is greater than any that can be against you.* If you have thes heart, be ready and willing, *God* will enable you to *Overcome* the greatest *Goliah* of the *Philistines*. And if at any time you should faint, *look unto Jesus the Author and finisher of your Faith*, let His example direct and encourage you, and as He did also look unto the *Recompense of Reward*, consider what shall be done to you if you overcome: You shal not be so meanly rewarded, as they were who obtained the Mastery in *Olympick Games*, who only gott Crowns of Flowers, Lawrels, and Mirths; nor yet as the *Romans* when they returned Victorious over their Enemies, who only had the Honour of a dayes Solemnity, and Triumph; nor is it a Crown of Gold which shall be bestowed on you which is the greatest reward to be expected in this World; But it is a Crown of Life, glory and Righteousness. *I have Fought a good Fight*, (saith St. Paul,) *I have finished my Course, and henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness.* Nothing is reckoned more august, and glorious then a *crown*; some have been at great Pains, and have run many hazards to win one. But there is no *crown* so glorious as this which awaits us in the other World: The splendor of it is represented by the Whiteness of the Stone in the Text; Its *excellency* and *magnificence* by the weight thereof, and its *duration* and *continuance* by

by the firmneſs of it; *Be ye therefore ſtedfaſt, and immoveable, and abounding alwayes in the Work of the Lord; For aſmuch as you ſee that your labour is not in vain*; And unto HIM who is able to make you *Overcome*, and who has promiſed thus, to reward you if you do *Overcome*, be Glory, Honour and Praiſe for Ever and Ever. *Amen.*

The

The FOURTH SERMON ON

At *Edinburgh*, on *Easter-day*. 1689.

1 CORINTHIANS, 18. 19.

If in this Life we have only Hope in CHRIST, we are of all Men most miserable.

WHat the Church Commemorats in this great *Festivall of Easter* Solemnly Celibrated by *all Antiquity*, *St. Paul* evidently proves in this Chapter, *viz.* That important Article of our *Creed*, *the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ*. And from this, necessarly he deduceth another most materiall Point, which is *the Certainty of our own Resurrection*. Not only the *Firm Belief* of both these Points are *Absolutely Necessary*, but also the *Serious* and *Frequent Consideration* of them is most usefull, that we may be strengthened and encouraged in our *Temptations*, Comforted in our *Troubles*, and animated to a *Chearful Labouring* in *every work of the Lord*. The certainty of an *after state*, as well as *the Quality thereof*, is only known by the *Gospell*, its *Jesus Christ* only who hath *brought Life*

Life and Immortality to Light through the Gospel; 2 Timothy 1. 10. The *Heathens* had some knowledge thereof, but it was very faint; It was only as a Dream and Imagination, for when our *Apostle* taught it at *Athens*, he was counted a *Babler*, and was mocked even by the *Philosophers* there. And among the *Jews* there was the Sect of the *Sadducees* who believed neither *Resurrection* nor *Spirit*. St. *Paul* attacks these *Epicurean* and *Saducean Priniples* in this Chapter, for it would seem that some of the *Church of Corinth*, were corrupted with them, and said, That *there is no resurrection of the dead*, though the belief of this point be so essential to a *Christian*, that he ceases to be one who denyes it. The words of our Text are one of these Arguments, St. *Paul* makes use of, for evincing the *Truth* and certainty of our *Resurrection*, and it is an argument taken *Ex absurdo*, which is accounted a demonstration even in the strictest Science; for there be many propositions of the *Mathematicks* which cannot be otherwayes demonstrated, then by shewing the absurd Consequences of their falshood.

I shall endeavour to hold out the strength and force of this argument of St. *Paul* for *another Life*: But first let us consider the *Truth* of his assertion here, *that We*, that is, Good and Sincere *Christians*, *would be of all others the most miserable, if there were no more expected then what this Life doth afford*.

Saint

Saint *Paul*, saith here, that if *Christians* had *no Hope* but *in this Life they would be of all Men most miserable*: He doth not say, they would be the only *Miserable Persons*, whereby he clearly insinuats, that others as well as they are lyable to Miserie in this World. As some Ignorant and Unjust Men charge *Religion*, with *Commotions* and *Mischiefs* in the World, and make it pernitious to *Common-wealths* and *Civill Societies*, though its Principles if truely understood, and candidly received, and heartily obeyed, would certainly tend to their *Peace*, *Setlement* and *Security*; So there be some who count *Religion* a great obstruction to the *Happiness* of private Men, that it imbitters our Lives, that it only Damps our Pleasures, and that it doth render Men wretched, by obliging them to much *Inward Sorrow*, and *Contrition*, and exposing them to much *Outward trouble*, and *affliction*. There be who think, and alleadge that Men would have an *uninterrupted Happiness*, and a *Constant Pleasure*, and *Satisfaction*, if it were not for the restraints that *Religion*, and the *Laws of God* lay upon them. But we may see the Contrary, from Daily Experience, they who are *Farthest from GOD*, and the observing *His Laws*, are not the fartheſt from miserie and trouble; Nay oftimes, men by *forsaking God*, and his Commandements have involved themselves in inextricable trouble, and brought upon them misery

fery and punishments, less supportable than what has befallen any for their strict adherence to *God*, and the Laws of *Christianity*. Its true, the way of Religion is *narrow*, and set with *thorns* too; but the *broad-way* has its uneasiness too, and in it Men meet also with mischievous and hurtful accidents. *The wicked man travelleth with pain all his dayes*, saith *Eliphaz*, *Job* 18. 20. And *Isaiah*, compares *the wicked to the troubled sea, which is still casting forth myre and dirt*; *Isaiah*, 57. 20. The Distempers and Diseases which follow *intemperance* and *excess* in Meat and Drink, are more troublesome even to the flesh, than *Fasting* and *Mortification*, and the other severities which *Religion* prescribes. That nasty and ugly disease which is the ordinary concomitant of lust, and reward of unclean Persons; as it is most shameful and dishonourable, even among the *Devils Votaries*, so certainly it is more grievous to be born than Persecution or Martyrdom for the *Name of JESUS*.

But not to insist further on these particular Evils, which follow Vice and Sin; let us consider Men in general in this World, and we shall see that they are lyable to many Temporal Miseries, and that though they would renounce *Christianity*, they could not secure themselves from trouble and sorrow. *Job* speaking of Mankind in general, saith, *That man that is born of a woman, is but of few dayes*

days, and full of trouble, Job chap. 14. ver. 1. Which is a Truth, that all the World will aſſent to, from their particular experience, Our Bodies are ſubject to diſeaſes, our goods are expoſed to violence and rapine, the Country we live in is lyable to be infeſted with Wars, Peſtilence and Famine. It were too tedious for me to reckon up all the *particular* troubles, croſſes and Afflictions, which Mans life is expoſed to in this World, and ſome one or other of them, every Man is daily encountering. *Great travel is created for every Man, and an heavy yoke is laid upon the ſons of Adam, from the day that they go out of their mothers womb, till the day that they return to the Mother of all things*; ſayes the wiſe Son of *Sirach*, *Eccl.* 40. 1. upon which account *Solomon*, *praiſed the dead, which are already dead, more than the living which are yet alive*; Yea, ſaith he, *Better is he than both they which hath not yet been, who hath not ſeen the evil work which is done under the Sun*, *Eccl.* 4. 23. So that it ſeems, he thought it better not to be born, than to be born and to live only to ſee and feel the miſeries of this life, which is certainly true, if Men be only deſtinated for this *preſent temporal life*. What *S. Paul* ſaith of Chriſtians, *that of all others they will be the moſt miſerable*, may be ſaid of *Mankind* in general, with a reſpect to other Creatures, if all *after hopes* ſhall be taken away, and that they be not conſidered with a relation to the *other World*. The

Beasts and brute creatures, are more happie than we, they are brought forth with less pain, & brought up with much less care they come sooner to perfection, and arrive at the sensible pleasures, proper to their severall beings with more facility and less travell; They are lyable to fewer calamities, and are not so much interrupted in their enjoyments, they live with more ease and die without any regrate or trouble; so that certainly, if there be no respect to an *other World*; Man is a more vain and miserable Creature than brutes, and still the more miserable, as they are the more wise, and good. Wherefore it is that the Apostle saith here of Christians, That, *if in this life only we have hope, &c.*

For first, Besides these *general calamities* which as Men, they are lyable unto; *Christians* are exposed to many particular troubles, and afflictions, upon the account of their Profession: For the Doctrines they teach and believe, the *Rules* which they follow themselves, and prescribe to others, are so contrary to Flesh and Blood, and so opposite to the Interests and common Sentiments of Corrupt Men, that they are still drawing upon themselves storms of Persecution. Our *Saviour* not only forwarns His *Disciples* of these Persecutions that would arise, for the *Gospels sake*; but he makes the cheerful undergoing of them, the indispensible condition of being *His Disciple*, and prescribes it as the

the first Lesson to be Learned of them; *If any Man*, (saith he) *will come after m, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross and follow Me*: Luke 9. 23. As the *Jewes* were greatly mistaken in their expectation of a *Messias*, thinking he was to establish a *Temporall Kingdom* and to bestow Temporall rewards; So *Christians* will be much mistaken if they think by *coming to Christ*, to secure themselves of Wealth, Honour, Riches, Preferments, and other Worldly advantages: For ofttimes they who *cleave to Christ* are forced to part with *These*, and who cannot find in their Heart to let them go, must part with *Him*; for *Both* cannot be kept together. As in one place, our *Saviour* saith, *He that loveth Father or Mother more then Me, is not worthy of Me, and he that loveth Son or Daughter more then Me, is not worthy of Me; And he that taketh not his Cross, and followeth after Me, is not worthy of Me*; Math. 10. 37. So in another Place, He sayeth plainly, *If any man come to Me, and hate not his Father and Mother, and Wife and Children, and Brethren and Sisters, yea, and his own Life also he cannot be My Disciple, and whoso doth not bear his Cross, and come after Me cannot be My Disciple*, *Luke* 14. 26, 27. which our Apostle and his other fellow Apostles, and the Primitive *Christians* found to be true by their own experience, for by becoming the Disciples of *Jesus Christ*, they not only forfeited the Common Comforts and conveniences of

this Life. But they also suffered all the Torments, Indignities, and Cruelties, which enraged Men could inflict, *They were Tortured, and had tryall of cruell mockings and Scourging, yea, and of Bonds and Imprisonments, they were stonned, Sawen asunder, Tempted, and Slain with the Sword, they wandred about in Sheeps Skins, and in Goats Skins, being Destitute, Afflicted, and Tormented.* And though *the World was not worthy of them, yet they were made to wander in Deserts, & in Mountains, and in Dens, and Caves, of the Earth.* Now this being the Condition of *Christians* St. *Paul* saith, they would be of all others, *the most miserable, if they had hope only in this present life,* for he speakes this with a relation to the Persecutions and afflictions they were then made to suffer, as appears from the 31. and 32. *Verses* of this Chapter, where He tells *of being in Jeopardie every hour, of his dying daily,* that is, daily he was not only exposed to death, but made to suffer such things as would make Death more Sweet, as is made out by what followeth, *that he Fought with Beasts at Ephesus.*

But then it will be alleaged, that this speech of St. *Paul* holds not alwayes true. It might be true that *Christians* were most Miserable in the dayes of the Apostles, and sometime after when Persecution raged against them. But the like cannot be said at other times, when they are allowed to live at Peace, & in Quietness. To which we reply that there is alwayes

reason

reaſon to pronounce this of *Chriſtians*, even upon the account of the Croſſes and Afflictions, they are expoſed to more then others: For in all times, ſufferings of one kind or another attend either the Profeſſion or Practice of *Chriſtianity*. *All that will live Godly* (ſaith our Apoſtle) *ſhall ſuffer Perſecution*, 2 *Tim*: 3. 12. and 1 *Theſſ*. 3. 3. He ſaith, *we are appointed to Affliction*. The taking up the Croſs, is a Duty which *Chriſtians* are allwayes bound to, and in the beſt and moſt Peaceable times there is ſtill occaſion for it.

Nunquam bella piis, Nunquam certamina deſunt,
Et quo cum certet, mens pia ſemper habet.

In the World (ſaid our Saviour to his Diſciples) *you ſhall have Trouble*. There will ſtill be Trouble, though not allwayes of the ſame kind, nor in the ſame meaſure. From the beginning, *He that was born after the fleſh, perſecuted Him that was born after the Spirit, and it is even ſo now*, (ſaith St. *Paul*) and it will be ſo ſtill to the end of the World. God ſuffers not the Hatred and Malice of the Wicked, to rage alike hotly againſt His People, nor does He let the ſtormes of Perſecution fall allwayes down in a furious violent manner; But He gives His People ſome reſpite, leſt they ſhould faint. However theſe Storms are always breeding, and it is the Duty of all true *Chriſtians* to expect them; and to be preparing for them. The World in its Calmeſt mood, is to be re-

garded, as the Mariners do the Sea, which though it sometimes puts on a fair & smooth Face, yet of it self it is a dangerous and uncertain Element, easie to be disturbed, and apt to rage, so that they who are upon it are never secure, they move in continual danger, and every hour are lyable to a thousand hazards, and mischances, which oblige them to be alwayes on their guard: Thus the life of *Christians* in the World, is more a warefare than that of other men, they struggle continually either with *actual persecutions*, or with the fear of them, which may prove as incommodious and prejudicial to their Peace and Quiet.

But here it may be asked, if such be the life and condition of *Christians*, how is this consistant with those Temporall Promises which the Scripture abounds with? Doth not the same Apostle say, *that Godliness is Profitable to all things, having the promise of the Life that now is, and of that which is to come*, *Tim.*4. 8. For answer hereto, you must know, that Religion and Godliness do in themselves Directly and Naturally tend to procure us Temporal Happiness, but the disorders which sin hath raised, and the general wickedness of the World, do interrupt this *natural Order* and *course*; As in a well *ordered civil State* and *Common-wealth*, Innocence, and upright and righteous Dealing is ones best security from *civil Punishments*, where-

whereas in a corrupt and degenerate ſtate, where there is no reſpect to Juſtice, or Equity, that will not ſave a Man; Money, Moyen, and baſe Deeds, will prevail more then the greateſt integrity. Moreover, *God* gives the Temporal promiſes, to take us off from Immoderate care and anxiety for Temporall things; And to confirm our dependance on *Him*, by aſſuring us, that He will provide what of theſe *things he ſees convenient.* But we are not to interpret them as aſſurances of an affluence of Worldly enjoyments; Nor muſt we accuſe him of *breach of promiſe*, when we do not flow in Earthly pleaſures. He may very well keep his word, though theſe outward things do not ſo much abound, if with a little *external meaſure* he give much *inward peace* and *contentment*, as he doth alwayes to his *own children: For, he maketh the little of a righteous man to be better than the riches of many wicked*, *Pſalm* 37. 16. Under the Law *Gods favour* was expreſſed much in *external bleſſings* and advantages; But it is otherwayes now under the *Goſpel.* Its true, there are temporal promiſes in the *Goſpel*, but they have an expreſs clauſe, of reſervation of the *croſs* and *perſecution*, as you may ſee, *Mark*: 10. 30.

However, the Text ſtill holds true, Conſider *true Chriſtians* whatever way you pleaſe; let them be never ſo well *ſheltred from perſecution*, & outward Croſſes; Let them have this life, and all its

its advantages, yet if they have no ground of *hope beyond it*, They are ſtill *miſerable* and *more miſerable* then others, who comes ſhort of their knowledge and perfection: For by the doctrine of the *Goſpell* they are made ſenſible of the vanity of all *ſublunary things*, are taught to deſpiſe and contemn them; They have their deſires raiſed after a *nobler felicity* then any here below, which yet they can never obtain, but muſt ſtill deſpair of; if ſo be there be no *life after this*; and therefore they can have no true pleaſure in this, becauſe they ſee themſelves in an impoſſibility of getting that good which their Souls crave. He cannot chuſe but be diſcontented, and conſequently Miſerable, who can never have that ſtate and condition ſuteable to the greatneſs of his mind: What a torment is it to a *Great Spirit*, and one of an *Heroick mind*, to ſtoop to mean ſilly things; How uneaſie would it be to one who has improved himſelf in all Wiſdome and Learning, and other *Morall Enduements* to be ſett allwaves to ſcourge a Tap, or the like Boyiſh exerciſes. Now the playes of Children are not ſo far below Men of age and underſtanding, as the beſt ſtate and Chiefeſt *Imployment of this World*, is below a true *Chriſtians minde*, which is improved to a capacity of a *communion with God*; and whoſe holy ambition aimes at no leſs. Who conſiders *this life only* as a place of Improvement for that *better life above*,

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may be contented & ſatisfied in *every ſtate*, becauſe there is no ſtate which doth not afford aboundant occaſions of *Recomending ones ſelf to God*, and acquiring theſe qualifications neceſſary *to Eternal life:* But abſtract from this, what a dull thing is Life, and how tedious and irkſome muſt it be to every wiſe and good Man? if it were not in order to *another Life*, this would not be deſireable, and the ſhorteſt Life would be preferable to the longeſt; To be Condemned to *Methuſalems* Life, would be no ſmall affliction; to be obliged to live for *Nine Hundered Years* in a Bedlam, and to dwell always among Fools and Knaves, for the World generally is no better, where there is daily repeated the ſame *Scene* of Impertinence and Villanie: This I ſay, would be very grievous to wiſe and thinking Men. Wherefore it clearly appears that if there were no *hope beyond this Life*, the beſt and wiſeſt Men would of all others be the *moſt Miſerable*; And that in this caſe, knowledge and vertue would not at all be deſirable, becauſe they would ſerve only to beget in Men a diſguſt *of this Life*. The moſt Brutiſh would then be the moſt Happy, becauſe as they aime no farther then the preſent Life, So they want the ſenſe to perceive the meanneſs of it.

Now the truth of *St. Paul's* aſſertion, in the Text, being thus cleared, I proceed next to ſhew the forcibleneſs thereof, for evinceing another

nother Life. That Men ſhould be more Miſerable then other Creatures; and the beſt Men the moſt miſerable men, is a groſs abſurdity. And who aſſerteth it, fixeth an Imputation upon GOD, which cannot be Mentioned without the horrideſt *Blaſphemy*. Wiſdome, and Goodneſs are eſſential Attributes of the *Deity*: but neither of them would appear, if Men were leſs happy then Beaſts, and the beſt of Men more miſerable then the reſt. What a vain thing were Man, if he were altogether Mortal? And how unlike the product of an infinite Wiſdom? Where were infinite Wiſdome, if a Creature capable of Imortallity made only ſome ſhort appearance upon an Impertinent and miſerable ſtage, & then were removed and annihilated? If the Faculties of an *Angelical Life*, and the Capacities for the higheſt Perfection, were given to one who could never ſtep beyond the meanneſs of an Animall and Senſual Life. And where were Divine Juſtice and Goodneſs, if there were no difference betwixt Good and Bad? If it fared alike with the Worſt and with the Beſt; If they who Feared, Loved, and Served *God*, ſhould not partake more of his Favour then they who had no regard to Him, nor to His Laws. If then it be inconſiſtent with the Wiſdom and Coodneſs of *God* to make Men leſs happy then Beaſts, and to ſuffer the beſt of Men to be more miſerable then the Worſt,

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and that it would be certainly ſo, if there were no other Life, then certainly there muſt be another better Life, to make the vaſt difference that ſhould be betwixt Man and other Creatures, good & bad Men. Therefore, the miſeries of Mankind in this World, but eſpecially of good Men are an evident proof, that there is another Life to come. *Quod erat demonſtrandum.*

Having thus laid before you the ſolid ground of a *Chriſtians* hope, and the ſtrong reaſons why we ſhould look for a better Life to come, I will next proceed to draw ſome neceſſary inferences from this great Important truth.

And firſt, we may learn hence the true Rules of meaſuring our own, and other Mens happineſs, which is to regard, not alwayes things preſent, but that which is to come. It may be no great matter to diſcern who hath the greateſt wealth, the higheſt honour, and largeſt poſſeſſions: But from theſe we cannot conclude who is the happieſt, for Mans happineſs *Conſiſts not in the abundance of theſe outward things, which he poſſeſſeth*, but in the ſure and well grounded hopes of that better life to come. The outward things of this World, can neither ſecure the preſent Life, nor make it comfortable to a truely wiſe conſidering Man: It's only hope of Heaven and Eternal Life, which yeeldeth true

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Contentment and Satisfaction to the Soul: who wanteth this hope is miserable how splended soever his outward state be. And though one possess nothing of this World, but live in the want of all outward comforts; Yet if he be nourished with this inward Consolation, if he be filled with a lively hope of that Life which is above, and demean himself so, as that he certainly shall come to it, There can be none more happie, his happiness is beyond expression.

2*ly* This sheweth that the Wicked and Ungodly are truely miserable, and the Good and Upright always happy, for the last have, the other cannot have a hope beyond this Life. As St. *Paul* saith here, that he and such as himself would be of all others, the most miserable, if their hope were only in this Life; So now in that their hope is not confined to this Life, but reacheth far beyond it, they are of all others the most happie; Look not altogether upon Mens outside, neither let your selves be deceived with the present Prosperity and success of the Wicked, nor scarred with the Crosses and Afflictions of the Godly, let not these things tempt you, to say, that *Its vain to serve God, and what profite is it to have kept his Ordinances, and to have walked mournfully before the Lord of Hosts?* Call not the proud happie, neither magnifie them that work Wickedness; nor despise the Good as fools, and mean Spirited Per-

Perſons; ſuſpend your Judgement untill you have ſeen, and conſidered the end of both; For what *Solon* ſaid to *Creſus*, is moſt true, no Man can be counted happie before Death. *Then ſhall ye return and diſcern betwixt the Righteous, and the Wicked, between him that ſerveth God, and him that ſerveth Him not, for they ſhall be mine ſaith the Lord of Hoſts, in that day when I make up my Jewels, and I will ſpare them as a man ſpareth his own ſon that ſerveth him. But behold, the day cometh that ſhall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly ſhall be ſtubble, and the day that cometh ſhall burn them up, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts; that it ſhall leave them neither root nor branch. Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace; but the tranſgreſſours ſhall be deſtroyed together; the end of the wicked ſhall be cut off. The wicked ſhall be turned into hell, and all the Nations that forget GOD.* But the Good and Upright have not only the advantage of the wicked in the other World, they have it alſo in this; for the proſpect of *eternal life*, and the ſure hopes they have of it, give them greater joy and ſatisfaction than the wicked can receive from their pleaſures and enjoyments: What reſults from the one is dull and inſipide in compariſon of the other. And as the wicked has leſs joy and ſatisfaction even here; So they are diſquieted with many vexing cares and tormenting fears, wherewith the Souls of the Righte-

Righteous are never affected: For not to speak of the terrours of Hell which sometimes seise them; they place all their happiness in these *outward things*, which are daily lyable to a thousand hazards, and therefore it is that they are never at rest, but miserably tossed with cares and fears. The difference betwixt the Godly and the wicked, may be compared to that of two persons at Sea in a most dangerous storm, where there is hope of saving life, but nothing else. But the one has a *goodly inheritance*, to live upon when he comes to land, and therefore cannot be much cast down, whereas the other having lost his whole stock and substance, is not only miserablie damped with grief for the loss of that: but also quite confounded with the thoughts of his after poverty and misery.

Thirdly, This Doctrine of the certainty of *another better life*, serves greatly to comfort us under the miseries and calamities of this; And therefore that we may have this comfort, let us both firmly fix the belief of it in our hearts, and also frequently meditate thereon. Its in vain for any to expect to pass thorow this World without trouble, and affliction, and there is no true support under any affliction, but the *lively hope of that glory which is to be revealed*; with this, one may bear the heaviest Cross chearfully, and without it, the lightest affliction may overwhelm the spirit

ſpirit; *For this cauſe*, ſaith St. *Paul*, *we faint not, for though our outward man periſh, yet the inward man is renewed day by day; for our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*; 1 *Cor.* 4. 16. Cheer up thy ſpirit whoſoever thou art, that lyeſt under the preſſure of any affliction, if thou repenteſt of thy ſins. if you love GOD, and be reſolved to walk ſo as to pleaſe Him, why ſhouldſt thou be caſt down? Lift up thine Eyes unto yonder Regions above, and conſider what an Intereſt thou haſt *there*? what a bleſſed Inheritance is there reſerved for you? Is thy condition here uneaſie and Troubleſome, and art thou ſtill toſſed about? remember when thou comeſt there, thou ſhalt have all Reſt and Peace. Art thou hated by Men, and Perſecuted with their Hands and Tongues, let not that vex thee ſeeing thou art *Beloved of God*, and haſt Friends *Above*, who will ſhortly receive thee unto *their Everlaſting Habitations*, Where are good things which neither *Eye hath ſeen, nor Ear heard, nor can the Heart of Man conceive them.* Take the ſpoiling of your goods joyfuly, *Knowing that ye have in Heaven a better and an enduring Subſtance.* Doeſt thou here ſuffer the want of all things, bear it for a while Patiently, for when thou aſcendeſt Heaven and enters into the Preſence of God, thou ſhall find *fulneſs of Joy and Rivers of Pleaſures for evermore.*

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The bitterneſs of this Life ſhall be abundantly recompenſed, by the ſweetneſs and happineſs of the other; There it is where we ſhall be comforted for all the dayes wherein we have been afflicted: For there *Men ſhall hunger no more, neither thirſt any more, neither ſhall the Sun light on them, nor any heat; for the Lamb which is in the midſt of the Throne, ſhall feed them, and ſhall lead them unto living Fountains of waters; and GOD ſhall wipe away all tears from their eyes*; Rev. 7. 16, 17. When *Columbus* ſet firſt out to ſea, in order to diſcover a new World, he ſuffered unſpeakable ſtraits, hardſhips, and difficulties. The very reading of them is aſtoniſhing, yet he ſtill bore out, by the hope of diſcovering land, which was very faint and uncertain; for he only conjectured, that there might be ſuch a thing; Now if ſuch a faint and uncertain hope of an Earthly Country, could make one run upon ſo many hazards, and bear up under ſuch diſaſters: What a ſupport to our minds, and a Comfort to our Spirits, ſhould the hope of an *Heavenly Country* be? A Country whoſe Riches, and Glory and Felicity, we *Poor Mortals* cannot conceive, much leſs expreſs: And which is no Dream, or conjecture, but which is clearly demonſtrated to us, by the *Word of God*; And from which nothing can obſtruct us, If we be but *ſtedfaſt* and *Immoveable*, and alwayes *abounding in the Work of the Lord*. Death

might have prevented *Columbus* diſcovery, and Robb'd him of that Satisfaction; But Death cannot impede our paſſage unto Heaven, for its the very means of entring into it; It's the very looſing of the Fetters, and removing the Cloggs, which detaine us in this miſerable life, and a ſetting us at Liberty to return to GOD, *whence we came*, and to take poſſeſſion of that *glorious life*, *which Chriſt hath purchaſed for us*.

Fourthly & laſtly, Is there a life after this, & a bleſſed life too? Then certainly it becometh us to give all diligence to ſecure it for our ſelves; 'tis no leſs our intereſt than our duty. It will not fall to our Lot by Chance, and without we uſe true endeavours after it. Its true, *Jeſus Chriſt* hath *purchaſed* this Life for us, and payed the *price of it*, without which no Man could ever have expected it: But ſtill it lyes on us to qualifie our ſelves for it, by the performances of thoſe Conditions on which it is granted, and theſe are *Faith* and *Holineſs*.

Firſt, We muſt have Faith, for without this ſaith the Scripture, *it is impoſſible to pleaſe GOD*; And if it be impoſſible to pleaſe Him without Faith, it is impoſſible to expect Heaven without it, for He will never admit one there who doth not pleaſe Him. *He that believeth on the Son, hath everlaſting life, and he that believeth not on the Son, ſhall not ſee life, but the wrath of GOD abideth on him*; *John* 3. 36. Now

the true evidence of this *Faith is Holineſs*, which is alſo the other Condition required of thoſe that would be ſaved, *Faith without Works*, ſaith St. *James*, *is dead*; And *without Holineſs*, ſaith St. *Paul*, *no Man ſhall ſee the LORD*, *Heb.* 12.14. How fit and proper unſanctified perſons may be for ſetling and propagating *Chriſts Kingdom* upon Earth, I do not well know, but this I know, and am ſure of, that none ſhall ſhare of His Heavenly Kingdom, but they *who are pure as he is pure*; *Every Man that hath this hope in him purifieth himſelf, even as he is pure*; 1 *Jo.* 3.3.

The abſolute neceſſitie of *Holineſs*, will I ſuppoſe be acknowledged by all, but I fear many miſtake what it is, and wherein it *Conſiſts*. Some think, that it lyes in Varniſhing a little the outſide, the putting on a *form of Godlineſs*, like the *Phariſees* whom our *Saviour* reſembled to *Whited Sepulchers*, which covered Rotteneſs and Filth; Some think they are holy enough, if their Opinions be ſound, and that they are in Communion with an *Orthodox Party*, and a Zeal to promote that Party which they think ſo, is all the *Sanctitie* which others aim at. I heard of one who teſtified of a certain perſon, *That ſhe was a Saint indeed*, becauſe, *ſhe had the Vocabula Artis*; What he meant thereby, I do not well know, except it was; That ſhe *ſpake the Dialect*, and *uſed the phraſes* peculiar to ſome People. Indeed he that *is holy*, will take heed to his words, but I know

I know no kind of Language ſufficient to *ſanctifie one*; and if there were, then there needed not great *violence in taking the Kingdom of Heaven.* But not to purſue theſe manifold ſad miſtakes of Men, *true holineſs* regardeth *GOD*, our Neighbours, & our ſelves. As it *regards GOD*, It conſiſts in *loving Him ſincerely* above all things, being ready to part with any thing rather than offend Him; In being zealouſly concerned for His Glory and Intereſt according to knowledge and equity: *For evil muſt not be done that good may come, who doth ſo*, ſaith St. *Paul*, *their damnation is juſt*; To drive on things *Per fas & neſas*, is ſo far from hououring *God*, that it occaſions Him to be blaſphemed. Finallie, he truely *loves God*, and is holy towards Him, who makes conſcience of keeping His Commandments, *O that my ways were directed to keep thy Statutes! Then ſhall I not be aſhamed when I have reſpect to all thy Commandments*, *Pſal.* 119. 5. 6.

But ſecondly, he that is *Holy towards GOD*, will be Holy alſo in all manner of converſation towards Men; theſe two *GOD* hath joyned together by His word, and Men muſt not put them aſunder: Now Holineſs towards Men is to *honour all Men, and to love the Brotherhood*; To deal with others as we would be dealt with; to be unjuſt to none, but to render all their due according to their ſeveral Places and Relations; And if I have not quite miſtaken the

Moral of the *Christian Religion*, it takes in ſubjection and obedience to our Superiors, and Lawful governours, in things Lawful. Moreover, holineſs towards our Neighbour, comprehends Mercy and Charity. We ought to have compaſſion upon him, to relieve his wants according to our ability, to forgive his Faults, and to cover his Infirmities, as much as poſſible. A *Holy Man* will not be *hard Hearted*, and ſevere towards his neighbour in his tranſactions with him, he will not pouſſe every thing to the outmoſt rigour, eſpecially when it cannot be done without his ruine. And St. *James* tells us, *he ſhall have Judgment without Mercy, that hath ſhewed no Mercy: James* 2. 13.

Laſtly, To compleit our holineſs, we muſt look well to our ſelves, and carefully preſerve our ſelves, *Unſpotted from this World*, we muſt *walk honeſtly as in the day, not in chambering and wantonneſs, not in gluttonie and drunkenneſs, not in ſtrife and envie, nor making proviſion for the fleſh, to fulfill the luſts thereof.* Frequent or Habitual Exceſs, and Rioting, Whoredom, and Uncleanneſs, Laſcivous looks, and ſpeeches; Not only ſpoile the *Beautie of holineſs*, but quite deface it. As to our ſelves; Holineſs is Chaſtity, and Purity, Modeſty, and Humility, Temperance, and Sobriety, the taking care to ſuppreſs the *Corruption of our Nature*, and to improve our ſelves in the *Exerciſe of every Grace*.

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Thus I have given you a true *Scheme of that holineſs* to which *Eternal life* is promiſed; And having ſuch a *promiſe*, let us therefore *Cleanſe our ſelves from all filthineſs of the fleſh and ſpirit, perfecting holineſs in the fear of God.* 2 *Cor.* 7. 1.

By theſe things we muſt ſtudie to qualifie our ſelves for that *other better life*, otherwiſe we do in vain expect it. Whether it be fit and proper to imploy wicked and unhallowed hands, in rearing up the *Temple of GOD* in this World; Sure I am, ſuch ſhall never inherit the Kingdom of *GOD* in the other: Let Men be never ſo active and zealous for *CHRISTS* Kingdom upon Earth; thò they *propheſie in his Name, and in his Name caſt out Devils, and do many wondrous works*: Yet if they be *workers of iniquity*, he will ſay unto them, *depart from me, I never knew you.* As the certainty of an *after happy State*, is clearly demonſtrated in Scripture; So there is nothing more plain and evident, than that *holineſs thorow Jeſus Chriſt is the only way that leads to it.* What a ſtrange thing then is it? And how unaccountable, that theſe who profeſs a deſire, and hope of this life do not walk in this way thereto. We have at preſent a great deal of talk about Religion, but there was never leſs of the Practiſe thereof. There was never more profeſſion, nor was there ever ſo little of the fruit of godlineſs to be ſeen. Religion and Truth are in every Bodie's mouth; But very few endeavour a con-

conformity to them. Some are altogether careleſs of holineſs, as if they knew ſome *by-path* or nearer *Cut to Heaven*: Others as if they had no hope but in this life, are only concerned for a *preſent temporal intereſt*: As if *Chriſts Kingdom* were only in the World, they only lay themſelves out for advancing and eſtabliſhing the *external policy of the Church*: And this too *Quovis modo*, by any means whatſoever; *they will do ill, that good may come*, and do think that the end will hallow the means, thò never ſo unlawful. But, my Friends, be not deceived, ſuffer not your ſelves to be cheated and deluded out of the *hope of Heaven, and eternal life*: And that you may not fall ſhort hereof, and loſe this *comfortable expectation*, let me intreat you to talk leſs, and do more: be leſs anxious about the outward forms of Godlineſs, and be more careful to ſhew the power thereof in your life and actions; Truſt *GOD* a little more with the care of his Church and Truth, and be ſomewhat more concerned to ſet up *the Kingdom of Chriſt within you*; without which, you ſhall both forfeit your part in that *glorious Kingdom above*, and alſo the honour and priviledge of his Kingdom here on Earth. *Therefore ſay I unto you, the Kingdom of GOD ſhall be taken from you, and given to a Nation bringing forth the fruites thereof*; *Matth*: 11. 43. This Judgement we have deſerved, and we have great cauſe to fear it: Nothing will prevent it,

it, but our timeous and unfeigned Repentance, a *ſerious turning to the* LORD, and bringing forth the *fruits of holineſs and righteouſneſs*. If we do this, GOD will yet have mercy upon our Nation, ſettle the State, preſerve the *Church*, and render *her illuſtrious* in *Order* and *Purity*, and will make *Religion* and *Truth* to flouriſh, to our Praiſe and Renown abroad, our Peace and Comfort at Home, and to further and facilitate our Attainment of *Eternal Life hereafter*. *A M E N.*

The

Preach: before the Presbytry of *Dalkeith.*

The FIFTH SERMON ON

1 *TIMOTHY Chap.* 5. *Verſe* 23.

Drink no longer water, but uſe a little wine for thy ſtomachs ſake, and thine often infirmities.

THE *Letter* of the Text needs not much explicati n, nor has the *Original* any thing more *Emphatick* or *Material* than this *Tranſlation*, ſo that any *analyſis* that could be made of the words, wou'd be meerly *Grammatical*; And therefore I'le not trouble you with it (though it may be uſual in theſe exerciſes) becauſe it would be a very dry and bare entertainment.

This verſe contains a particular precept to *Timothy*, concerning his *Bodily health*, and ſo it is a matter of ſome difficulty, to find out the reaſon why it comes in here, among ſo many Grave and Important directions about the *Government of the Church*, and eſpecially why it ſhould be caſt in before the 24*th.* and 25*th.* verſes which have evidently a relation to the 22*d.* whereby the *Apoſtles* diſcourſe is inter-

interrupted, and what ſhould be joyned together is divided aſunder. To take away this difficulty, ſome fancy that the order of the *Apoſtles* words has been changed, and miſplaced by ſome Ignorant and *unwary Tranſcrivers*, which is no ways to be *admitted*; nor can there be alleged any *Ancient Manuſcript*, or modern Copy of a different Reading from this which is uſed by us, upon which ſuch a conceipt may be grounded. The general current of *Interpreters* give no other reaſon, for the inſerting this particular precept among ſo many general ones; but St. *Paul*'s friendſhip for *Timothy*; And the great concernment he had for one, who was ſo eminently uſeful to the *Church of God*. They do not allow it any Connexion with what goes before, and frankly acknowlege that it hath no manner of relation to the *Apoſtles Purpoſe* in this Place, and do think it a vaine thing to ſearch for it, it being very uſual with the Apoſtle to make digreſſions, to bring in *things abruptly*, to fall from his purpoſe and to return to it again; Which the learned *Daille* juſtifyeth, ſaying, That it is the way of writting uſed by the *other Divine* and *ſacred Authors* of the *Scripture*, & beſides that it is evident that the beſt, & *moſt ancient*, & the *moſt admired Authors in the world* have alſo *practiſed it*, as may be ſeen in theſe works of theirs, which remain with us, wherein theſe great Men have not tied themſeves to the artificial Rules,

Rules, of *Logick* and *Rhetorick*, invented by the weakneſs and ſubtility of modern Spirits; but do in their Writs keep almoſt the ſame order, the ſame air, and the ſame manner of ſpeaking which is uſual in common diſcourſe and ordinary converſation, whereof Writtings ſhould be the Image and Picture. In the conferences and diſcourſes which we hold *viva voce*, there is nothing more ordinary, than to break of the Subject begun; and to re-aſſume it again after ſome pauſes and digreſſions; And why ſhould this liberty be denied to thoſe that write? But with a due deference to this great Man's Judgement, I do think that a greater coherence, betwixt Mens Thoughts and Words, may be looked for when they write, than when they ſpeak. In conference we are obliged to follow others, and ordinarly the company caſteth in ſomething or other, which neceſſarly draweth us off the main ſubject; whereas when one writes he has all freedom for his Thoughts, and it's not to be ſuppoſed that a wiſe and knowing perſon will interrupt his purpoſe, or caſt in any thing in the handling of it, which doth not ſerve for an Illuſtration, the obviating an objection, the preventing a miſtake, or the like. And ſuch coherence muſt not alwayes be denied, when it is not apparent to every Reader. If we underſtood the Scripture truely, and had a particular knowledge of

of the ſcope and purpoſe of the ſeveral parts thereof, I doubt not but there would be found a more admirable Union and Coherence, than what is commonly believed, though it's chiefly to be regarded for the great and important Truths delivered therein. Upon which very account it is more to be valued, than all the moſt accurate and cloſely written Books in the World.

As to the preſent Text, I do not think it comes in ſo abruptly, and without any relation to what goeth before, as is commonly alleaged; for I would make it to be delivered on this occaſion. In the former Verſe St. *Paul* chargeth *Timothy* to lay hands ſuddenly on no Man, that is, to be ware of admitting any haſtily into the Office of the Miniſtry, for, if through his careleſneſs any unworthy perſon creept in, he would have an acceſſion to all the bad effects of their Miniſtry: Their Miſcarriages and Male adminiſtration, their Sins and their Scandalls were to be charged on him; and ſeing every Man will find burthen enough of his own Sins, therefore he adviſeth him to take care, that he be not by this means partaker of other Mens Sins; and from thence taketh occaſion to exhort him to keep himſelf in all things unſpotted in the ſight of GOD: *Keep thy ſelf pure*, ſaith He, which in the firſt place referreth to the former inſtance, of not admitting of unworthy perſons

persons into the Ministry, or any one hastily: But withal it's to be extended farther, to the avoiding all things which may stain or pollute us; For there is nothing more ordinary in Scripture, than to take occasion of particular Duties to recommend a general Sanctity, an instance whereof we have, *Mat*. 5. 48.

Now least such a serious exhortation to *Timothy*, who was forward enough of his own accord, should have made him overdo in his acts of temperance and abstemiousness; the Apostle wisely casts in this caution, *Drink no longer water, &c.* Thus I would construe the words, and make them cohere with that which goeth before.

Before I consider the Apostles precept in it self, I think it will not be amiss to draw some *observations* from the occasion of delivering it.

And first; This shews what care *Ministers* should take in their Teaching both publickly and privately, to adapt their discourses to the Hearers, and so wisely to caution their Doctrine, that they may not give occasion to any to entertain, or to run into errours and mistakes. The very Scriptures, Saint *Peter* tells us, *are wrested by the unlearned and unstable*; and how much more readily will such wrest the words of Men: And though it is not possible to prevent altogether the abuse of our Doctrine, and the perverting our words, yet it becomes us to guard against it as much as we can,

can, and by timeing our Doctrine aright, and ſealoning our Diſcourſes ſo well with the *ſalt of Divine Wiſdom*, to keep our ſelves free of all acceſſion to ſuch abuſes, as *ignorant* and *perverſe men* may make of what we deliver. There be ſome general things which we cannot preſs enough, and which may be largely inſiſted on, as *Faith*, *Repentance*, *Love*, *Charity*, *Holineſs*, and the like; But particular Duties have Bounds and Limits which muſt not be leapt over, for the Exceſs proves vicious, as well as the defect; which *Solomon* may have an eye to, when he ſaith, *Be not Righteous over much, neither make thy ſelf over wiſe.* Eccl. 7. 16. In refuting Errors care ſhould be taken ſo to ſtate the Truth, that thoſe we would reclaim may not run into the contrary extreme, which falls too often out, becauſe 'tis little heeded. When we comfort the Drooping and Diſconſolate, we ſhould beware of blowing them up into preſumption, or of turning them careleſſe or ſecure; and ſhould ſo apply the threatnings and terrours of the Goſpel to ſuch as ſeem careleſſe and obdurate, as that they may not be driven to deſpair. The neceſſity and efficacy of *GODS Grace* ſhould be ſo taught, as that Men may not think their own endeavors needleſs. And in preſſing perſons to work out their own Salvation, we ſhould take heed of weaning them from a *dependance upon GOD.* Zeal ſhould be ſo taught, that people may

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not think themſelves bound to leap out of that Rank and Order, wherein *Providence* has placed them: And in reſtraining them from theſe Diſorders, we ſhould be careful not to render them *unconcerned* and *lukewarm*. Obedience to Superiours ſhould be ſo ſtated, that they may ſee themſelves tied to things Lawfull, and in which the Superiours has a right to command, and no more. Things indifferent may become ſometimes very uſeful, and then they ought to be recommended; but not ſo as to enſnare the Ignorant into a belief of their being abſolutely neceſſary, or ſome way *meritorious*. In a word we ſhould ſo deliver our Doctrine, ſo temper our Exhortations and Reproofs, that our Hearers may neither come ſhort of their duty, nor yet go beyond what is proper in any particular *incumbent* on them, but may be made to go on ſtraightly in the *way of Truth* and *Righteouſneſs*, without turning to the *right or the left hand*.

Secondly, We may learn hence what are the beſt and trueſt expreſſions of Friendſhip; *Friendſhip is the very Soul of Life*, as one ſaith, it exceedingly ſweetens it, and where this is wanting, there can be but ſmall ſatisfaction: But then true Friendſhip doth not ſpend it ſelf, in a *phantaſtick dottage* on the perſon of our Friend, nor doth it evaporate into idle words and complements. Friendſhip doth not conſiſt in flatteries, nor is he the trueſt Friend who is moſt obſequious, who humours his

Friend

Friend in all things; Who is like *Agesilaus*, of whom it is said, *that he was so partial for his Friends, that he would not have any thing they did found fault with, whether it was right or wrong.* Such for the most part are the Friendships amongst the Men of the World; but they scarce deserve the name, they are hardly a shadow of it. True Friendship designes the good and happiness of the Friend; But these draw on his ruine and destruction, St. *Paul* understood well what the sacred name of a Friend imported, and therefore he expresseth his Friendship for his beloved *Timothy*, by giving him instructions how to behave himself aright in his place and station, and by correcting his mistakes and faults, that he might become useful to the *Church of GOD*, and Loved and Admired of all. If then we would have a true Friend, let us chuse such an one, as may further us in the attainment of Wisdom and Vertue, who as he will be carefull to approve of us when we do well, so will not fail to admonish us when we do amiss. These are the true Offices of Friendship, he abuseth and betrayeth it who doth not use them, and he is not worthy of a Friend, who will not admit of them.

Thirdly, Consider what a concernment all should have for Eminent and useful Persons, and how desirous they should be of their safety and preservation. *St. Paul* was at a di-

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ſtance from *Timothy*, but yet carefully tenders his health, and remembring his ſickneſs and infirmitie. doth preſcrive him Remedy, even in the midſt of thoſe great and weighty Directions about the *Doctrine of the Goſpel*, and the *government of the Church*. The *Affairs of the Church*, and the *Intereſt of the Goſpel* is certainly of more moment than any particular Man; Yet you ſee when the *Apoſtles* thoughts were moſt taken up with theſe things, he is mindfull of *Timothy's* particular health, and puts in a preſcription for it amongſt the other: which he did not ſo much becauſe he was his *beloved Friend*, but becauſe he conſidered him as one very *ſerviceable to the Church of GOD*, and as one whom under *GOD* the proſperity of the *Church* ſomewhat depended. As in the Natural body, all the Members ſhould be had a care of, but thoſe eſpecially ſhould be regarded and tendered, which are moſt uſeful and important, and which might hazard the whole, if ought ailed them; Even ſo every Member of *Church* and *State* ſhould ſhare of *our love*, but thoſe whom *GOD* has raiſed up, and by His *ſpecial Gifts* and *Graces* has ſingularly fitted for *preſerving*, *recovering*, or *advancing the good of Church and State*; I ſay, they ſhould be much eſteemed, and their particular welfare ſhould be carefully ſought, by all who regard either *Religion* or the *Civil Peace*; for when it is not well with theſe, the other are in hazard. In

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an Army the lives of private Souldiers should be secured as much as is possible; But *Heroes*, and valiant Generals, and Captains, much more, because if they should be cut off, the other should be soon scattered; and if they be preserved, they can by their Valour and Conduct, recover a loss sustained amongst the common Souldiery: Its true, Man can do nothing without *GOD*, but *GOD* ordinarly worketh in and by the means of Men. Such Men therefore should be much respected and cared for whom *GOD* has marked out, to be fit instruments of conveying His Blessings, to whom he has given Wisdom and Zeal and Courage and other proper Enduements, for propagating Truth, stopping Error, the curbing of Vice, and the right ordering the house of *GOD*: which bringeth a general Blessing upon the land, and tendeth to the *Temporal* and *Eternal welfare* of every *indivdual*.

I come now to consider the precept in it self, in which you may take notice of what St. *Paul* adviseth *Timothy*, and then the reason he gives of that advice: What he adviseth him is. *To drink no longer water, but a little wine*; The reason he gives, is for *his stomachs sake, and his often infirmities*. I begin with the first, *Drink no longer water*. This is no positive prohibition of the use of Water, but it has a particular reference to *Timothie's* practise, which must be considered for the better un-

derſtanding of the *Apoſtles* meaning. It would ſeem that *Timothy* had heretofore made uſe of no other ſort of Drink but Water, not certainly that he was not able to procure Wine to himſelf, nor yet from any ſcruple about the lawfullneſs of uſing that Liquor; For ſo great a perſon as *Timothy* was, to whom St. *Paul* gave ſo high *Elogies* every where throughout his *Epiſtles*, and whom he thought worthy of the Truſt of the *Church* of *Epheſus*, could not be ſo Ignorant as not to know that *every Creature of God is good, and nothing to be refuſed if it be received with thanksgiving.* No doubt St. *Paul* taught him early, *that the Kingdom of God is not Meat and Drink, but Righteouſneſs and Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt*; And being ſo taught he would be far from placing Religion in ſuch kind of abſtinences. But his continued uſe of Water, was either becauſe he was ſo brought up by his Parents, or out of his great Temperance & Sobriety; & that by this means in *imitation* of his great Maſter St. *Paul*, he might *keep his Body under, and bring it into ſubjection, leſt when he Preached to others he himſelf ſhould be a caſt away*, as the *Apoſtle* ſpeaketh 1 *Cor.* 9. 27. But whither upon this, or any other Motive it was, that *Timothy* did ὑδροποτεῖν, *continually Drink Water*, St. *Paul* obſerved it prove prejudical to his health, and either occaſioned or increaſed theſe Bodily diſtempers he was ſo much ſubject to, and therefore he adviſeth him here to *forbear that ſo much uſe of Water.*

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This Practice of *Timothy* which occasioned St. *Pauls* inserting this Direction here, affords us a fair occasion of reproving the *Epicurisme* and Luxury of the present age, and recommending Temperance, and subduing of the Body by Fasting, Abstinence, and other Acts of Mortification. The primitive *Christians* kept their Bodies under a severe Discipline, which is now a dayes worn altogether out of fashion: We are not so far behind them in time, as we fall short of their strictness and severity, which is the reason that we come so short of their Devotion and Piety, and these other *Christian vertues* which rendered them illustrious. An account of their severities and mortifications would be thought *fabulous*; Men accustomed to such softness and looseness as we of this generatiõ would hardly be induced to believe it, and if any of them were returning back to this World, they would have as great difficulty of believing us to be Christians, seing we work so much the *will of the Gentiles, and walk in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquettings, and do run* easily and forwardly as they do *to the same excess of riot*. And indeed if our ease, voluptuousness, and loose manner of living be suitable enough to the Joyes of Heaven, and consistent enough with the Graces which are necessary to fit one for it, then *Paul* and *Timothy* and all the primitive *Christians* were Fools and Mad-men, as an *Ita-*

lian Monk said once wittily, preaching before two *Cardinals*. But the imputation of folly falls certainly on us, and not on these great Lights of the World. Our Apostle thought Chambering and Wantonness, Gluttony and Drunkenness, only agreeable with the Night of Heathenish Ignorance, but we have turn'd them fashionable in the day of the Gospel, we make these works of Darkness face the clearest Sun shine. So little are the Men of this Age acquainted with *Abstinence* and *Mortification*, that I fear they would brand a Man with *Heresie* that would recommend them. There is no restraint put upon the Appetite; but occasions of satiating them, are industriously sought but; who are able feed to the full, and not to be able to do it is reckoned a Misery. *Back* and *Belly* take up the thoughts of *Poor* and *Rich*. And most Mens contrivances, the very end of their Life, is that they may ly softly, and fare diliciously every day. This is the fashion of this Age after this manner do Men now frame their Lives: But this is not the way to imitate the *Primitive Christians*, nor yet to walk by the *Rules* of the *Gospel*. If Man were only *Flesh*, if he could taste no *Higher Pleasures* than what comes to him by the Sense of the Body, this were not so unreasonable, though it be reported even of *Epicurus*, that he established *Sobriety and Temperance by his Principles*: If a *Mahumetan Paradise* were all our expectation hereafter, I would

would not either think it unlawful or improper, to give way to our Appetites, and to cherish voluptuous desires, whereby we may be disposed for those sensualities which are promised there: But seing our Heaven is of an other sort, and that we are assur'd that GOD will *Destroy both the Belly and Meat*, and are told of pure *Spiritual Joyes* to be tasted even in this Life, excess, surfeiting, and a full feeding daily is most unseemly; to pamper the Body is to ruine the Soul; for thereby those Lusts are Cherished and Strengthned, which was against the Soul and destroy it. We need not greater *Enemies of our Salvation*, than what are lodged *within our selves*; If all the Enemies without were removed out of the way, our own Flesh and Body would precipitate us into *Perdition:* What reason then have we with *Paul* and *Timothy*, to subdue the Flesh, and to keep our Bodies under; if these two eminent Saints did this, least they should have been *Cast-awayes*; certainly we should be afraid to neglect *Abstinence* and Exercises of *Mortification*, whereby the Flesh is kept from rebelling against the Spirit, or at least disabled from gaining a Victory over it. If our Body be not kept in subjection, if restraints be not put upon our Appetites, they will turn unruly, and at last involve us into utter Ruine. *As Bridles should be put into the Horses mouths*, (so saith St. *Augustine*) *our Bodies should be bridled*,

and keept in with Faſtings, Watchings and Prayer: Nam quem admodum aurigæ, ſi fræna laxaverint per præcipitia ducuntur, ita & anima noſtra cum ipſo corpore, ſi ei frænum non impoſuerimus ad infera præcipitia dilabitur. But however uſeful it may be ſometimes, and for ſome Perſons, to Exercile *Abſtinence*, and other Acts of *Mortification*; From what St. *Paul* adviſeth *Timothy* here, we learn in the next Place, that the uſe of theſe things ſhould be always managed with Prudence and Diſcretion, that they may neither prove Prejudical to our health, nor yet degenerate into Superſtition. Faſting and other *corporal Auſterities* are not things in themſelves abſolutely neceſſarie- but become *fitt* and *good*, according as they are ſubſervient to other things which are ſo; They are to be accounted *Religious Acts* only when they ſerve to the *great ends of Religion*, and as they further the attainment of thoſe *Vertues* and *Graces* which *Religion* ſtrictly enjoynes: When they are not profitable this way they profit nothing at all; If they prove rather hinderances, than furtherance of thoſe *Moral Duties*, to which either our general or our Particular calling obligeth, then they are wholy to be laid aſide. An exceſs in the obſervance is no ways commendable, and ſometimes more hurtful than the total neglect of them. The *Fleſh* with its *Luſts* ſhould be *Crucifyed*, but the Body by no means is to be deſtroyed; It's fitt to keep the Body

Body under, but it ought not to be ſo *enfeebled* as that it cannot diſcharge the *Functions of Life*, wherefore they bewray a great deal of Ignorance, Weakneſs and Superſtition who make a ſcruple of forbearing their *Faſting* and *abſtinences*, when their circumſtances ſeem to require it, as when they are under any indiſpoſition of Body, or when abroad and cannot performe them without ſome ſigns of oſtentation, ſome more then ordinary trouble to themſelves, and inconvenience unto others; For when by theſe or the like reaſons, things of the like Nature ceaſe to be uſeful or prove *Noxious*, they alſo even though vowed, ceaſe to be acceptable unto God. And here the *Church of Rome* fall's deſervedly under a moſt levere cenſure, in that ſhe preſcribes *Faſts* and *abſtinences ſo ſtrictly and abſolutely, as to oblige all at all time, in all places and Circumſtances, except they procure to themſelves the* Popes *pardon, and diſpenſation*: The *Papiſts* are moreover to be blamed, for *reſting too much in the outward abſtinence from particular Meats*, and placing a *kind of Merit in doing ſo.* It's obſervable that there are none of them tied to the imitation of *Timothy*, in *Driking only water*: The ſtricteſt orders amongſt them are allowed the uſe of Wine, for they ſay *Liquidum non ſolvit jejunium.* Their *Abſtemiouſneſs* conſiſts in the forbearing the *uſe of Fleſh, at certain dayes and times* which if they do, they ſin not againſt againſt the

Cannons

Canons of that *Church*, though they riot and commit excess in *Fish*, which are certainly as pampering as any other kind of Food. The devotion of that *Church*, lyes too much in these *Abstinencies*, and other like Bodily Exercises; By these they think they make satisfaction for their Sins, and it's only from these *Works of Supererogation*, that that Church receives the *treasure of Merits* so often talked, and so much boasted of, which things if they be *Meritorious* some of the *Ancient Hereticks* might have stood as high upon this point as they; Nay, there are *Pagans* at this day, who may claim *Merit as much*, for we are told by several Travellers, that many of them come nothing short of the *most Religious in the Church of Rome*, in *Abstinence* and *Corporal Austerities*, and many of them very often outdo them. But whoever make Religion to consist in these Bodily *Exercises*, neither understand the *Nature of God*, nor the proper way of *Worshiping Him*; *He is a Spirit, and He will be Worshiped in Spirit and in Truth.* Who think by those means to *compensat their Sins*, and the *Omission of Moral Duties*, *mock God* and *deceive themselves.* "If (saith St. "*Augustine*) thou macerate thy Body by long "fasting, and yet persevereſt in ill, *magis hor-* "*res quam placeas DEO:* Then shall thy Fasts "be acceptable, when thy Conscience is pur- "ged from Sin, and thy Life adorned with "good works. *Cur enim corpus fame discrutias*

cui

cui turpiter peccando blandiris? He hath shewed thee, O Man! what is good, and what doth the Lord thy GOD require of thee; it is not to *ly hard*, and to deny thy self the *sober use of his Creatures*; It is not to *whip thy self with cords*, and to undertake *long journies bare footed*; But it is to do *justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy GOD*. Then and then only we please GOD, when we *abstain from all fleshly lusts, and do mortifie our members upon the earth, fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry; for which things sake, the wrath of GOD cometh upon the children of disobedience*. Col. 3. 5. Whosoever therefore think fit to dyet themselves with any sort of *Abstinence*, and to discipline the Body by any manner of *Austerity*, let them beware of being proud of it with the *Pharisee*, and of running into *Superstition* with the *Papist* and *Heathen*: Let them not wrong the health of their Body by their indiscretion, nor think thereby to wash their Souls from the Guilt and Pollution of Sin, otherwise they are so little to be commended, that they are to be condemned; and so far from gaining, that they lose both with GOD and Man.

But to go forward with the Text, as the Apostle adviseth *Timothy*, to *forbear* the *continued use of Water*, so he enjoyneth *the use of wine*, whereby He establisheth lawfullness of the use of that Liquor against the *Manachees*,

Encratitæ

Encratitæ, and other *ancient Heretick*s, and *Mahomet*, who maketh *Abſtinence from Wine*, one of the principle Articles and Characters of his Religion. Our *Saviour* long before warranted the uſe of it, by His own practice; and if it had not been lawful to drink Wine, He would not have made a Miracle for *furniſhing it to the wedding of Cana.* This, and all other the like *Superſtitions*, concerning Meats and Drinks, are clearly and fully refuted by that aſſertion of the Apoſtle in the former Chapter; *Every creature of GOD is good, and nothing to be refuſed, if it be received with thanksgiving.* But I ſuppoſe, there is none here enclined to any ſuch Hereſie, and therefore I will inſiſt no more upon it. But as there is no queſtion to be made of the Lawfulneſs of the *uſe of wine*, ſo there is as little to be made of the Unlawfulneſs of the *abuſe of it*, which is alas! but too too ordinary, and which St. *Paul* cautions againſt, in the words of our Text, when *he enjoynes but a little Wine*: He mentions *a little*, not for *Timothy*'s cauſe, for there was no fear of his *running into exceſs*, but for the ſake of others, into whoſe hands this Epiſtle might come- that none might pretend the Apoſtles warrand, for going beyond a due meaſure. *A little wine is good, it maketh glad the heart of Man*; and therefore *Solomon* bids *give it to thoſe that are of heavy heart.* Prov. 31. 6. But too much is dangerous, for then it enflameth the Spirits,

Spirits, diſordereth the Blood, diſtorteth the Countenance, and doth violence to the whole frame of the Body, and maketh it an unweeldy inſtrument for the Soul, and by frequent Exceſſes of this kind, the Mind is at laſt beſotted, and the inward Faculties worſted: Wherefore the Apoſtle had good reaſon to ſay, *Be not drunk with wine wherein there is exceſs.* Eph. 5. 18. And leaſt it ſhould be thought that only weak Heads, who cannot bear drink but are ſoon intoxicated, fall under theſe prohibitions, the Scripture denounceth *a woe unto them, that riſe up early in the morning that they may follow ſtrong drink, that continue until night till wine enflame them.* Iſai. 5. 11. The Creatures of GOD are good indeed, but the abuſe of them is evil; they are created for our uſe, but they are not to be laviſhed away without all Reaſon, Neceſſity, or Conveniency: The quaffing off as much as another, is in the ſtile of *Drunkards* and *Bon companions*, called, *a doing one reaſon*; but certainly it's againſt all reaſon to abuſe *the good Creatures of GOD*, or *our ſelves* by an immoderate uſe of them, contrary to His expreſs and peremptory Command. I cannot adduce all that can be ſaid againſt this Vice of Drunkenneſs, for that would carry us far beyond the meaſures of a Diſcourſe. I ſhall paſs over what *Heathens* have ſaid, and what the very *common light of Nature* may furniſh us with, and ſhall only give one

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or two Inſtances peculiar to *Chriſtianity*. It is firſt then, contrary to that Duty of Watching againſt our *Spiritual Enemies*, which our Holy and Chriſtian Calling obligeth us to: They are baſe and treacherous Souldiers, who fall to Eating and Drinking when they know the Enemy is cloſe at hand, and ready to give Battle; we are begirt about with many, and ſubtile Enemies, and therefore ſhould be aſhamed of *Exceſs* and *Intemperance* in Eating and Drinking, which incapacitate us from defending our ſelves or reſiſting them. *Be ſober, be vigilant,* (ſaith St. Peter) *becauſe your adverſary the Devil as a roaring lyon, walketh about ſeeking whom he may devour*; *Pet.* 5. 8 Secondly, it is diſagreeable with a patient *waiting for Chriſt*: That ſervant has little regard either to his Maſter, or his own Credit and Intereſt, who by debauching away his Senſe and Reaſon, putteth himſelf out of a Condition of *coming to his Lord* when he is called, and of giving that account which is asked of him. O the horrour and confuſion of being hurried out of this World, and carried before the *Tribunal of GOD*, in a fit of Drink and Exceſs! And yet this hath often happened unto *Drunkards*. *Take heed therefore to your ſelves*, (ſaith *Chriſt*) *leaſt at any time your hearts be overcharged with ſurfeiting and drunkenneſs, and cares of this life, and ſo that day come unawares. If the ſervant ſay in his heart, my Lord delayeth his coming, and ſhall begin to beat*

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the Men-servants and Maidens, and to eate and drink and to be drunken, the Lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers; *Luke* 21. 34. 12. 45.

Thirdly, It is inconsistent with those *spiritual exercises* our *holy Religion* calleth for, and indisposeth one for receiving that *holy Spirit*, *Whereby he is to be sealed unto the day of Redemption. Be not drunk with Wine*, saith St. *Paul*, *wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit:* In which words he establisheth a direct opposition betwixt these two, so that the one necessarly thrusteth out the other. The heart which is *moved by Wine*, cannot be sensible of the *motions of the Spirit*; Nor can the head be filled with it, which is darkned and overcast with the fumes of drink. The *Holy Spirit* can only reside in *pure and Holy Souls*, upon these accounts and many more that might be alleged, there is hardly any thing more unbeseeming *Christians* than Drunkenness, though alace! it be too too ordinary. And that a *Clergy Man* should be guilty hereof, is not onely most unbeseeming, but abominable: The very supposition is horrid; That he should be given to this, who hath not only *himself to watch over, but many others*, Who ought to wait *his Lords coming*, not only to give account of himself, but of all under his charge.

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The burthen of our *Holy Calling* is too great to be sustained by our own strength: *Who*, saith St. *Paul*, *is sufficient for these things?* None therefore have more need of the *aids of the Holy Spirit than we*, and therefore also none ought to be more careful to avoid what may grieve this *Holy Spirit* and *provoke it to desert us.* And consequently *Ministers* should not be given to too much Wine, that they may be in a capacity of receiving the *Spirit of God*; And that when it comes, it may reside with them t direct Strengthen and Comfort them.

I come now to the reasons St. *Paul* gives for prescribing *Timothy a little Wine*, to witt, *His Stomachs sake, and his frequent infirmities.* It was not upon the account of *Conscience*, for upon this account *Wine* and *Water* are things indifferent; Neither the one nor the other is contrary to *Piety*, providing *Water* be not Drunk to *Superstition*, nor *Wine* unto *Excess*: But the *Apostle* considering *Timothy*'s *Weak stomach*, and the Diseases to which he was subject, for correcting the one, and preventing the other, he prescribed him the *Use of a little Wine*, which is certainly a cordial, to be either Drunk alone or mingled with Water.

From which, we may observe; That the rules of *Eating* and *Drinking*, either as to the *Quantity* or *Quality*, should be taken from the Health and Vigour of our Bodies, that we may be enabled to discharge either the *Gen-*

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ral functions of Life, or the *Particular Duties of our Calling*. We ſhould not take pleaſure in *Eating* and *Drinking* for themſelves, but out of a regard to the ends *for which they were ordained*, and to which they are *Subſervient*; nor ſhould the moſt delicious *Meats* and *Drinks* be luſted after, but what conduceth beſt to health. And if *God* affoord wholſome meat and drink, we ought to be content, though our table be not furniſhed with dainties.

Secondly, we may learn hence the lawfulneſs of uſeing *Natural means* for the removeing of *Bodily diſtempers*, and other *outward afflictions*. Diſeaſes as all other afflictions are of *God*, it is His hand which inflicts them, and therefore we ought to bear them patiently: But yet we may ſeek the removal of them, and uſe what is fitt and proper in order thereunto, without walking contrary to that *Submiſſion* we owe to *God*.

Thirdly, It doth hence appear, that the *Gift of Healing* beſtowed on the *Apoſtles*, and others at firſt, was not always uſed at the *Arbitriment of him* who had it, but upon ſome ſpecial *Direction of the Spirit*, and at ſome particular occaſions; when it tended to the confirmation of the *Goſpel*, or the making way for *Mens Faith* in it. For if St. *Paul* might have healed every Perſon, and at all times, he neither would have ſuffered his *Beloved Timothy*, to be ſo much troubled with the Bodily Diſtem-

Diſtempers here ſpoken of, nor yet *Epaphroditus his fellow labourer, to be ſick nigh unto death*, as we read *Phil.* 2. 27. Which ſhews the vanity of ſome *Popiſh Doctors*, who that the healing promiſed by St. *James*, as the *Effect of Prayers*, and *Anointing with Oyle*, may not be referred to Bodily health as is generally alleged by *Proteſtants*; Say that then it would follow that none died in thoſe dayes, which is ridiculous: Whereas we ſee clearly here by the example of St. *Paul*, that theſe who were endued with the power of *working Miracles*, did not heal all the *diſeaſes* they met with, but did only exerciſe that power on ſuch perſons and at ſuch times, as the *Spirit of GOD directed them* to, for the advancement of the *glory of GOD*, and *honour of the Goſpel*; which alſo affords us a reaſon why Miracles are ceaſed, for they being given at firſt only for demonſtrating the Truth of the *Goſpel*, and evidencing that they who preached it were of *GOD*, now that this has fully appeared, there is no more need of Miracles.

Laſtly, The *Apoſtles* making mention of *Timothie's ſickneſs*, and being lyable to frequent infirmities of Body, gives us occaſion to treate of a very important queſtion, *viz.* how it can be conſiſtent with the *wiſdom* and *goodneſs of GOD*, to inflict ſore and heavy Diſeaſes, and the like Diſaſters on Eminent and uſeful Perſons, ſuch as *Timothy* was, whereby they are diſabled

Disabled from the exercise of their functions and hindred from promoting the *Great Work* of the *Gospel*, and the *Salvation of Souls*? If a King be engaged in War, doth he employ Crazie and Sickly Generals, and Captains? Would he not wish them perfect Health and Strength of Body, that they might be in a capacity of disciplining the Army, and of going about to exhort and encourage the Souldiers? How then comes it to pass that the Champions in the *Christian warfare*, that the Generals and Captains in *Gods Spiritual Militia*, should be so much lyable to Bodily distempers and infirmities and other grievous afflictions, nay more lyable commonly than any other sort of Men, so that they cannot make these advances and progress which otherwise they would? The great St. *Chrysostome* starts this question upon this very Text, and handles it at great length in a particular discourse, but I shall be very brief upon it, having been so large already, and shall only touch a little at these things which come properly under this head.

First, Then, for answer to this question, the same reason may be given for the Sickness and Bodily distempers, of the *Ministers* of the *Gospel*, even the most eminent, which the *Scripture* gives in general for the affliction of the *Children of God*, *viz.* That hereby they may be tried and perfected. GOD will not

have His Children and Servants soft and effeminate, but wise and well experienced, which cannot be without putting them to diverse Temptations and Afflictions. *The Captain of our Salvation* was *perfected by sufferings*, and by the same means we must all arrive to true perfection.

Secondly, this is done to keep these Servants and Favourites of GOD in all Humility, and to preserve them from Pride which would cast them out of His Favour. Men are naturally enclined to be proud, they are apt to be vain and lifted up, for the very common enduements of Nature, and how much more ready would they be, to be exalted in their own conceit, for the special and much more valuable Blessings of Grace? If something were not done to them at the very time, to convince them of their frailty and meanness. After St. *Paul* was *caught up into the third Heavens*, and had so many special Favours bestowed on him, he tells us, *Least I should be exalted above measure, for the abundance of the Revelations there was given to me a thorne in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, left I should be exalted above measure* 2 Cor. 12. 7. Some make this *thorne in the flesh* to be a grievous pain in the Head, but I have not leasure to examine that matter.

A Third Reason, is, That other Men may not think of them above what they ought to think.

think. The World has been generally too much enclined to magnifie their *Heroes* over much; they have made *gods of meer men*, because of the eminency that appeared in them, and upon the account of the Benefits they had from them: Now GOD to restrain His people from such Absurdity, and that none of His beloved Servants employed by Him, might become a snare to others, or a means of dishonouring Himself; He therefore stamps them with visible marks of *Humane Frailty*: He makes them bear in their Body the signes that they are Men, that none may be so senseless as to *Deifie* them.

Fourthly, GOD thus dealeth with the Servants, whom He employeth in His special work of the Gospel, that He may bring the greater Glory to Himself, *His strength is made perfect in weakness*, the more weak, mean, and silly the Instrument be, the more doth His Wisdom and Power appear, which atchieve great things thereby. The Excellent and Heavenly Treasures of the Gospel are committed unto *Earthen vessels*, *that the excellency of the power may be of GOD, and not of Men: He chuseth the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty: that no flesh should glory in his presence; but as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.* 1 Cor. 1. 27.

Fifthly, The *Divine Providence* ordereth these

harsh Dispensations, to these His Servants, to manifest the Truth and Sincerity of their Heart to all the World: how that they do not serve Him for *Temporal Things*, as the Devil thought *Job* did: Of whom GOD said to the Devil, *That he was a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth GOD, and eschewth evil, who still holdeth fast his integrity although thou movest me against him to destroy him without cause*; and to make this fully and clearly appear GOD suffered all these disasters to befall him.

Sixtly, One end of this *Providence*, is to keep People in *Hopes of a Resurrection* and *Future Rewards*: For if the Justice and Goodness of GOD, cannot but reward those who faithfully serve Him, and that they receive not their Rewards in *this Life*, therefore it's certain there must be *another*, wherein they are given. *If in this life only we had hope we are of all men most miserable*, saith our Apostle. And because it were most absurd to make him, and others like him, the most miserable of Men, therefore their miseries are a most convincing argument of a better life.

Seventhly, GOD layeth diseases on *Timothy*, and such other eminent Servants, that the Weaker and Meanner ones may have Comfort and Encouragment. Man is apt to despond in adversity; Afflictions are ordinarily construed signs of the *Divine displeasure*, and proofs of GOD's rejection, which be of dangerous

gerous consequence, and ready to run the Weaker and Ignorant sort into despair: Therefore GOD to Comfort such, He afflicteth his most beloved, that it may be seen *Whom He loveth He chastiseth, and correcteth every Son that He receiveth*; And so none may either despise or murmure against the chastisements of the LORD.

Finally, GOD suffereth His chosen Servants, and whom He designeth to be leaders of His People, to fall into frequent Infirmities; Not only that they may give example of Patience unto others: But that all other People may be excited and encouraged, to irritate and follow them, in all other vertues which shine forth in their life. If the *Prophets* and *Apostles*, if the *Timothies* and other *Eminent lights of the Church*, had been exeemed from the common Calamities and Infirmities of *Humane Nature*, People would have concluded them, to have been something more than Men, and so would have excused themselves from the imitation of them: But now that we see clearly, they are Men of the like passions and infirmities with our selves, what can we say? What excuse can we pretend for not shewing the like *Zeal* and *Devotion*, & *Piety* and *Charity* and *Patience*, and *Courage* which they manifested on all occasions? The Weakness of our Natures needs not hinder it, for we see that these who were naturally as weak as our selves,

have attained to these and all other graces, wherefore we ought to lay aside all excuses, & to wrestle through all difficulties, and to go on with St. *Paul Fighting the good Fight*, and endeavouring to do all things Commanded us *through Christ that Strengtheneth us.*

More Reasons might be given, but these are sufficient, not only to clear the *Divine Wisdom*, and *Goodness of all Imputation*, but also to make them appear eminently in such dispensations, towards His best and most beloved Servants

When I first entred on this Discourse, I intended to have taken in the two following Verses, not thinking that this one would have furnished matter enough for a Discourse; but you see how far the handling of it hath carried us, and how without digressing from the purpose of the Text, or doing violence to the words thereof, several material and important Observations have been drawn: From which we may see as St. *Chrisostome* observes, the fulness of the Scripture, and that an inexhaustible treasure of wisdom and Knowledge is contained in it. when one single Verse, and so barren at the first appearance, can afford so many and so useful instructions. If one Verse can do such, what may the whole do? Surely, *It is able to make us wise unto Salvation*, and beyond all question *is profitable for Doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,*

that

that the Man of GOD may be perfect throughly furnished unto all good works. GOD grant that this *Word of His* may dwell in all *Christians* richly in all *Wisdom*; But especially in the *Ministers of the Gospel*, whose *Office* it is to instruct others therein. *AMEN.*

The

Preached in the High Church of *Edinburgh*, on *October* 16 1687.

The SIXTH SERMON ON

HOSEA *Chap.* 5. *Verses* 13, 14, 15.

Verse 13. *When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah saw his wound: then went Ephraim to the Assyrian, and sent to King Jareb: yet could he not heal you, nor cure you of your wound.*

Vers. 14. *For I will be unto Ephraim as a Lyon, and as a young Lyon to the house of Judah: I, even I will tear and go away: I will take away and none shall rescue him.*

Vers. 15. *I will go and return unto My Place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek My Face: In their affliction they will seek Me earlie.*

EPHRAIM is put here for the whole *Ten Tribes*, who revolted from the house of *David*, and embodied themselves into a distinct Kingdom. Under *Judah*, is here comprehended also the *Tribe* of *Benjamin*, which two *Tribes*, as they kept clos in allegiance, and expressions of Loyaltie to their Lawful King, so they made profession of serving the One true GOD, in that way and after that manner,

manner, preſcribed by his word. By *the Sickneſs of Ephraim, and the Wounds of Judah*, is meant thoſe Afflictions and Calamities which GOD ſent upon the ſeveral ſtates, becauſe of their Sins and Tranſgreſſions; And by conſidering this Propheſie and the hiſtory of theſe ſeveral Nations, we find the Judgments they were viſited with, & which are here eſpecially pointed at, to have been a withdrawing the neceſſaries and comforts of life, factions & diviſions within, and oppreſſions from Neighbours without. By *Ephraim going to the Aſſyrian*, and *Judah ſending to King Jareb*; The ſame thing is underſtood by all Interpreters, for they make *Jareb* either the proper name of the King of *Aſſyria* then reigning, or an Appellative title given to all the Kings of that Nation, as *Pharoah* was the title of the *Kings of Egypt*, and *Cæſar* of the *Roman Emperours*; or it is thought to be the name of a city in *Aſſyria*, where the Kings recided; and that he is called *King Jareb*, becauſe he lived there, or finallie, conſidering the *Etimology* of the word, ſome will have the King of *Aſſyria* ſo called, becauſe the *Jews* and *Iſraelites* expected, he ſhould have vindicated and defended them, wherefore the *Tranſlators* of the *Bible* have put into the margine, *Or to the King that ſhould plead.* But which ſoever of theſe wayes be taken, all conclude that *Aſſyria* is meant, and that reſpect is had to what we read 2. of the *Kings* 15. 19 16th. 17th.

17th. 2. Chron: 28th. 16th. Where we see how both *Judah* and *Israel*, entered into a league with *Assyria*, and studied by monie and presents, both to procure his own peace, and also assistance to cure and restraine others who infested them. and when it is said; *he could not heall you, nor cure you*, thereby it is represented how ineffectual this *method* was for their relief, for they were not put in a better state by his means, so far from that, that even he from whom they expected ease became an Instrument of more mischief & trouble unto them, as the *Sacred History* plainly shews. The reason hereof is given in the 14th Iver. *to wit*, because God *was angrie with them* and resolved to *punish them*, he was determined to be *as a Lyon to Ephraim, & as a young Lyon to Judah, to tear them, and take them away*; That is, as these Beasts are strong to catch their prey, & when they have set upon it do devour it, and it is in vain to think to get it safe out of their clutches, so God being incensed, He will shew Himself Able and Strong to Punish those who had done it: And it was a most foolish thing to think by Men or any other Means to prevent the mischief he certainly determined: it was like the offering to take back a Prey from the Jaws of a Hungry and Raging Lyon. Who can rescue out of his hands? When he Declares Warr who can make Peace? Men may Fight with Men, but it is in vain to strive against *God*, or to think that any Means or projects will prosper

ger where he is the enemie. And as theſe *ſavage beaſts*, when they have catcht their Prey and eaten it up, uſe to retire to their Dens and Coverts and lurk there, ſo in alluſion to this, GOD ſaith in the laſt verſe He *will return to his Place*, that is as it were ſhut himſelf up in Heaven, that ſhould no more feel His gracious Preſence, or the Comfortable effects thereof. He would ſo leave them and forſake them, by withdrawing the favourable expreſſions of His providence, as that they ſhould be tempted to think He had confined Himſelf to Heaven, and would no more viſite the Earth, nor the Children of Men. But all this GOD did not ſo much out of wrath, and for deſtruction, as out of love, that He might at laſt ſave them, and make them Partakers of His great goodneſs. They were ſo perverſe as to reſiſt His gentle Methods, ſo ſtubborn as not to be wrought upon by His former Acts of kindneſs, that He was Provoked and (if it were proper to ſpeak ſo of the Almighty) conſtrained to take up the Rode, and to deal with them thus Roughly and Severely. But ſtill his intent was, not to Cut them off utterly from Him, but rather to bring them into a ſtricter Union with Him afterwards: He let His anger out now upon them, that they might afterwards be made capable of His love, to wit, when they became ſenſible of their ſin and folly, in forſaking the Commands of *God*,

and

and resolved to seek Him seriously in all time coming; This saith He, I will do *till they acknowledge their offence and seek My Face.* And as GOD had this end before Him in their Punishment, so there is here a gracious intimation, that the Punishments laid upon them should be effectual for this Purpose; *In their afflictions they will seek Me early*, which words are not so much a *prediction* of what probablie they would do, as a promise what he would then by *his grace* make them do: *afflictions* have indeed some natural tendency to soften Men, to render them tractable and obedient, but then only this is truely effectuated, when God Sanctifieth afflictions & giveth His grace with them; And when affrictions produce this, when People are so happy as to be converted by them, then GOD layeth aside all Quarrels, He putteth off His anger, and putteth on Bowels of Love and Compassion, He hideth His Face while Men continue in their Sins and Transgressions: All the time they are going a Whoring from GOD, He retires within His Place as is here said; But when they begin to acknowledge their offences, and in all Sincerity seek His Face, then He comes forth of His Place, and lifts on the light of His Countenance upon them, and speakes Comfortably unto them, His *going forth is prepared as the Morning*, and then He *cometh unto us as the Rain, as the latter and former Rain unto the Earth* which both refresheth it, and maketh it fruitful.

Thus

Thus I have explained the words and given you the genuine Scope and Purport of them. In the next place, I intend to propoſe plainly ſuch Inſtructions as they afford, and as I judge them both uſeful and ſeaſonable; ſo I pray GOD, they may be Candidly heard, meekly Received, ſeriouſly Conſidered, and carefully Obſerved.

First then, We may read and diſcern here, the cauſe and occaſion of all the Evils and Miſchief, which comes either upon private Perſons, or on publick States, *viz. SIN*: This is the bitter Root which ſhoots out all kind of Miſery. If Man had not known Sin, he would never have felt Puniſhment. We ſhould never have been made to taſte the bitter Fruits of Trouble, if Sin had not been planted in our Natures, and if it did not ſhoot out and mingle with our Life and Actions. It's to this, we muſt aſcribe all the Diſeaſes which infeſt both particular Perſons and publick States, and where Sin is cheriſhed and doth abound, we may certainly conclude, that Trouble and Calamity will follow; for the one neceſſarly dogs the other at the heels; *Ephraim's Sickneſs*, and *Judah's Wounds* proceeded from their Sins; as appears both by the Text and Context, they firſt ſuffered the Malignant Humour of Sin to creep into their Veins, and to ferment there; and thence it was that they drouped and languiſhed, and

felt

felt so much pain and sorrow. Our *first Parents* no sooner tasted the *forbidden Fruit*, then they were filled with Shame and Confusion: for these are the inseparable effects of Sin. The Body cannot but be sick and pained which is disordered, disjointed, and which suffers convulsive Motions; no more can they who are infected with Sin be without Grief and Anguish. Therefore *Eliphaz* said truely, *That the wicked Man travelleth with pain all his dayes*, this is but what is agreeable to the very Nature of his Constitution. And besides the Misery and Trouble which is naturally interwoven into the very constitution of Sin, it makes one lyable to the Wrath and Anger of Almighty GOD, it necessarly draws down His Displeasure: And who will not be Sick & Wounded, who groans under the pressure of *GODS* wrath. As the *light of his contenance* puts more gladness into a Mans heart, then when *Corn Wine & Oyle doth* abound, So the *abstraction of His favour* is more grievous then the *withdrawing health*, and all outward Comforts and Conveniences; but becaule Men are a little dull to perceive this, therefore GOD teaches them how miserable it is to be without *His favour*, by depriving them of outward comforts, and what they apprehend to be the ground and matter of their happiness: his *favour* is the foundation of all *felicity*, and the cause of all the good we enjoy; and his displeasure

pleaſure is ever attended with outward puniſhments. No ſooner did *Adam* offend GOD, but he was caſt out of *Paradiſe*, and had the Earth curſed for his ſake; and as this is the original of theſe common calamities, which our life is lyable to while in this World; ſo whoever trade the ſteps of theſe common Parents, and imitate them in their diſobedience to GOD, ſhall ſhare of their lot, and not go unpuniſhed; *for the face of the Lord is againſt them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. Lo they that are far from Thee ſhall periſh, thou haſt deſtroyed all them that go a whoreing from thee*, *Pſ.* 34.16.&73.27. We muſt not indeed conclude them the greateſt ſinners who meet with the greateſt outward trouble & affliction in this World. Our *Saviour* hath taught us the contrary; And *Jobs* caſe is a clear proof that it is not ſo: But certainly *God* is ſo juſt, as never to inflict puniſhment, but where there have been previous faults to call for it: And as ſome of the beſt of Men have had the greateſt ſhare of troubles and affliction; ſo the beſt have been guilty of ſin, and the leaſt meaſure of this guilt is ſufficient to juſtifie the greateſt meaſure of puniſhment, which can be inflicted upon any in this world: and if ſome of the greateſt ſinners have eſcaped exemplary puniſhment here, it is becauſe GOD reſerves them to a more ſad and heavy doom hereafter. How ever it be with particular

ticular persons, it is certain in the general that sin offends *GOD*, and never goes unpunished; and however particular persons may escape examplary punishment in this life, yet Nations, Kingdoms, and publick Societies are alwayes visibly punished in this World, when they are corrupted, and defiled with sin. Crosses and afflictions have been laid upon particular persons, sometimes more for tryal then for punishment: But general Judgements and Calamities never came upon a Nation or People, till they were first ushered in by sin and iniquity; nor is it possible to give one instance of the escape of any Nation where Sin and Iniquity abounded. GOD doeth sometimes forbear till the Cup of their Iniquities be full, as He said of the *Amorites*; but when People have filled up the cup of their Iniquitis, then GOD is ever sure to make them Drink of the Cup of His wrath. Nor did Number, or Multitude, or Greatness or Splendure ever prevail with *God* for an Act of Indemnity, where the continuance and multiplication of Sin cryed for Judgement, as may be evidenced in the old World, in *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, in *Pharoah*, and *Nebuchadnezzar*, *Nineveh*, and *Babylon*, & several others which may be drawn from Sacred and Prophane Historie. Nay near Allyance and Relation to himself never made any be spared, as appears from this instance of the *Jews* and *Israelites*. Many

favours

favours GOD has ready to beſtow upon His People, but they can never expect an indulgence from ſin; So little reaſon has any to do that, that the relation of being the Peculiar People of GOD, gives the greater cauſe to fear Judgement, if they be guilty of ſin; As we may learn from theſe words ſpoken by the Prophet *Amos*, *You have I known of all the Families of the Earth, therefore I will Puniſh you for all your Iniquities. Amos* 3. 2. Judgements and Calamities, threatning a Nation, and impending over it, are certain Declarations that ſin and iniquity abound in it: And the abounding of ſin and iniquity, is a certain *Prognoſtick* that the *Judgements of GOD* are not far of. Theſe things mutually prove one another, if therefore we have reaſon to fear *publick calamities*, we have as much reaſon to conclude that we are *great ſinners*; if we ſee the *publick Body*, whereof we are members, *ſick* and *wounded*, we may eaſily gueſs the cauſe of its diſtemper; and if we diſcern a general Corruption and Depravation of Manners, throughout the Kingdom, and among all ranks, without great foreſight we may foretell a Viſitation of the *Divine Judgements*. If the general *pulſe* of the Nation beats *Vice* and *Sin*, as it is no great wonder we feel *inward pangs* and *throws*; ſo it needs no great skill, only a little acquaintance with the *Word of GOD*, and the general courſe

of *his providence*, to declare that the bodie wilt be ſeized with ſore and dangerous fitts, that i will be ſadly toſt and ſhaken,

Sequitur ſuperbos ſemper a tergo Deus.

Secondly, We may obſerve hence, how dull generally Men are in taking up the cauſe of their maladies and diſtempers. They eaſily perceive the evils which touch them, but are not ſo ſoon ſenſible of the cauſe and occaſion, which makes them groan Longer under the diſtemper. *Ephraim* perceived his *ſickneſs*, *Judah* felt his *wound*; their ſenſes taught them both theſe, but they had not underſtanding enough to diſcover, whence theſe things came; they never blamed their *ſinful complexion*, and were ſlow in conſidering that the reaſon they were ſo pinched and infeſted, was becauſe they ſinned and would not *frame their doings to turn unto their God.* And it is juſt ſo with the generality or the world at this time. Men have ſenſe enough to perceive the outward evils that are upon them, but ſcarce any to diſcover the hand which inflicts them, or the cauſe which procures it. Touch a man in his *bodie*, in his *fortune*, or in any thing *dear unto him*, he will be quickly ſenſible of it, and ready enough to complain: But there be few ſo wiſe, as to acknowledge that the root of the matter is in themſelves. People ordinarly throw all the blame of their trouble from off themſelves upon

upon other external things; he that is sick finds fault with his dyet, or his riding and travelling unseasonably, and in unwholesome weather; he that is wronged and oppressed, chargeth and accuseth such and such persons, as perhaps are the immediate Instruments thereof; in times of publick Calamitie and Disasters, all the talk is, how they began, and after what manner they proceeded; if the Plague enter a place, the Inhabitants curiously enquire about the first person who brought it in; if Fire take hold of a City, the discourse is about the small occasion of its beginning, and the unwarriness of the Servant who kindled it. *States men* and *Polliticians* resolve Wars, civil Broills, and Factions, Oppressions, and other things of the like Nature, into Pollitical Causes. Philosophical Heads exercise their Witts in finding out natural Reasons of Famine, Pestilence, immoderate Drouth, excessive Rains, and other such Judgements, according to the uncertain *Hypothesies* of some vain System they have imbib'd. And thus Mens thoughts are carried off, from the serious consideration of the true cause of all the evils that are upon them. They reflect not upon their own Sins, nor the Sins of the Land they live in. They say not with *David*, *Thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore, there is no soundness*

in my flesh, because of Thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones, because of my sin. For mine iniquities are gone over mine head, as an heavy burden, they are too heavy for me; Psal. 38. 2. Its long before People come to lay to heart, that the evils which are upon them, are because *the Lord hath a controversie with the inhabitants of the land; because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land; that it is by reason of swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, and other abominations, that the land is made to mourn.* To take only notice of the immediate Instruments of our Trouble, without enquiring into this chief cause thereof, is just but to act like Children, and to do what the common Rabble do at publick Executions, who only consider how the condemned person is led to the Scaffold, and after what manner the Executioner proceeds to put him to Death, never reflecting upon the Sentence of the Judge, nor the transgression of the Law, which yet ought chiefly to be considered. *Hear ye therefore the Rode, and who hath appointed it*; as ye feell the evils which are laid upon you, so call to mind from whom they come, and for what cause they are sent, other wayes ease and Relief is not to be expected. Its necessary in order to the removing of Bodily Distempers, that there be first a knowledge of the *Nature* and *Cause* of the disease

eaſe, without this there can be no Cure, all applications are ineffectual; Even ſo the firſt ſtep to *remove the wrath of GOD*, and the *ſad effects* of it, is to find out thoſe *Sins* and *Tranſgreſſions* which have occaſioned it, till this be done, its in vain to ſtrugle, and to uſe endeavours for the ſaving our ſelves; It is but as the common Proverb is *a ſtriving againſt a ſtream which is too ſtrong for us.*

And thus I am brought to a third Obſervation, and it is this, *that when GOD is viſiting with His Judgements, people are ſeldom ſo wiſe, as to addreſs themſelves firſt to GOD; But they ordinarly in the firſt Place have recourſe to ſecond cauſes and humane endeavours, which tends but to their greater Ruine and Miſcheif.* *Ephraim* and *Judah* here in ſtead of making *Application* to GOD, ſent to the King of *Aſſyria*, and addreſſed to King *Jareb*, ſo when ſickneſs comes upon Men, the *Phyſician* is ſent for, and he is required to uſe his Skill, and to apply his Remedies; And with the Woman in the *Goſpel* who had the Bloody Iſſue, they ſeek not out *for Chriſt*, till they have ſpent much upon the *Phyſicians* to no purpoſe, and that their Art and Skill hath been quite baffled. When Perſons are oppreſt and born down, all their thoughts are how to make moyen with thoſe who are able to eſpouſe their cauſe, and to counterbalance the power of the perſon or party who vexeth them.

In a word every one conſiders the neareſt and likelieſt method and means, of procuring to themſelves Eaſe and Relief; and when they have diſcovered the ſame, they are wholy bent on it; and the eagerneſs of Men to be ſaved by thoſe means, which their own Prudence has ſuggeſted, keeps them from exerciſing that *Truſt & dependance on GOD* which is neceſſary. Men have not faith enough ordinarly to committ their *cauſe entirely to GOD*, and they walk ſo much by ſight, that they can put little truſt, where they ſee no viſible means; And becauſe ordinarly *GOD works by rational means*, and has eſtabliſhed in the world a ſetled order, and a ſeries of cauſes, for producing certain effects, they too much imagin that theſe things work neceſſarly, and that they cannot be diſapointed of the effects, while they make uſe of the means and cauſes which ordinarly produce them: Whereas all *things depend upon the bleſſing of GOD*, and only work and take effect as He is pleaſed to give the word unto them. I do not ſay that *prudent means* and *methods* ſhould be neglected, or that Men ſhould expect *deliverances miraculouſly* when theſe other may take place: But that in ſeeking to ſave our ſelves from any Danger or Judgement, we ought to *apply our ſelves to GOD*, and as we ought never to uſe any means for our ſafety, but what is lawful; So in the uſe of the

moſt *Lawful* and moſt *proper means*, we ought to *Depend entirely upon GOD* for the ſucceſs, elſe we may expect theſe means to be blaſted, or what is worſe to turn to our hurt and greater dammage: As we ſee here befell the *Iſraelites*, for the King of *Aſſyria* whom they ſent to, not only could not heal them and cure them, but He brought upon them more Trouble and Miſcheif then what they ſought Him to prevent. *Curſed is the Man that truſteth in Man, maketh Fleſh his Arm; And whoſe heart departeth from the LORD, for he ſhall be like the Heath in the deſert, and ſhall not ſee when good cometh*, *Jer.* 17. 5. 6. All humane helps, without the *LORDS* aſſiſtance, are but as the *Staff of Egypt, a broken Reed whereon if a Man lean, it will go into his hand and peirce it*, *Iſ.* 36. 6. Winds, Rains, and Storms, the malice of Men and Devils, and whatever infeſts Mankind, are all at *GODS* command and under His Power; They break not out till He give the word, they are His Officers ſent forth to execute His Pleaſure; And as they go when they are ſent, ſo they will not retire till He call them back. Its both folly and treachery to tamper with the Officers and Souldiers of the King, without ſeeking to ſatisfie the King himſelf. If People be at Warr with ſome mighty King, they cannot expect to be freed from the Invaſion of his Armies by Land, or from the pilfer-

ing and robbing of his Pirrats by Sea: Peace ſhould be firſt ſought with the King himſelf, and then theſe other moleſtations will ceaſe of their own accord. It was wiſely as well as devoutly done by *Hezekiah*. when he received the threatning letter of *Rabſhakeh*, he went to the *Houſe of the LORD*, and *Spread it before the LORD, and Prayed*; He firſt tryed to ſecure *GODS favour*, knowing that if he found acceptance with him, *Rabſhakeh* could not hurt him, and that all his brags and boaſts would prove but empty puffs, which carried no Ball to do miſcheif. There is certainly no ſecurity, but in the *favour of GOD*; And let none Pride themſelves, that whatever fall out they have this, and the other thing, to lean to, and upon this account think themſelves ſafe enough; for if they lean not to GOD, and make not Him their Friend, all their other props will fail; and they ſhall receive but the ſurer and the greater fall, the more they have truſted to them. *Hear the Word of the LORD ye ſcornfull men; who ſay, we have made a covenant with death, and with hell we are at agreement, when the overflowing ſcourge ſhall paſs through, it ſhall not come unto us; for we have made lies our refuge, and under falſhood have we hid our ſelves: Behold, ſaith the Lord, judgement will I lay to the line, and righteouſneſs to the plummet; and the hail ſhall weep away the refuge of lies, and the waters ſhall overflow*

ſhow the hiding place, and your covenant with death ſhall be diſannulled, and your agreement with hell ſhall not ſtand; when the overflowing ſcourge ſhall paſs through, then ſhall ye be troden down by it: Iſa: 28. 14. &c. *When a mans wayes pleaſe the Lord,* then and then only, *he maketh his enemies to be at peace with him.* Which leads me to

A fourth Obſervation from the Text, concerning the Terms and Condition on which we may make our Peace with GOD, to wit, the *Acknowledging our Offences*, and the *ſeeking His Face.* By this means we may both prevent evils threatned, and remove them when they are inflicted. As ſin brings on the rode, and as it is continued to make men ſenſible of their ſins; ſo it is laid aſide when they have learned a due ſenſe of them, and do unfeignedly repent of them: For GOD taketh no *pleaſure in the death and deſtruction of ſinners, he doeth not grieve willingly, nor afflict the children of men.* He would ſpare the rode, if men would be dutiful without it; and even when he is provoked to lay it on, he ſtill retains the *natural bowels of affection*, which a Father hath towards his Children, and would be glade of the occaſion of treating them more gentily. *How ſhall I give thee up Ephraim? How ſhall I deliver thee Iſrael? How ſhall I make thee as Admah? How ſhall I ſet thee as Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled toge-*

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ther. And when he is here in our Text threatning to *withdraw himself*, you see he limits it to the time they should *acknowledge their offence, and seek his face:* thereby declaring when ever they did that, he would *return to them*, and with his presence bring along all those comforts and good things they had been deprived of. The men of *Nineveh* when they were threatned with an *utter overthrow*, and that within *fourty dayes* too, they nevertheless builded themselves hope upon this *merciful nature of GOD*, and his readiness to be reconciled to men when they are reconciled to their dutie; and therefore having proclaimed a fast, and enjoyned Repentance, they comforted themselves with these words, saying to one another, *Who can tell if GOD will turn and repent, and turn from his fierce anger, that we perish not.* And that any Nation may take courage tho never so much threatned, that there is no reason to despair, but certain ground of hope, if we forsake our sins and turn to the LORD, is clear from *Jerm.* 18. 7. where *GOD* saith, *At what instant I shall speak, concerning a Nation, and concerning a Kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it, if that Nation against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them;* From which he makes this inference, *now therefore go to, speak to the men of Judah, and to*

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the inhabitants of Jeruſalem, ſaying, thus ſaith the LORD, *behold, I frame evil againſt you, and deviſe a device againſt you, return ye now every one from his evil way, and make your waves and your doings good.* In the 26 of *Levit.* GOD ſaith there to his People, if when theſe plagues there mentioned are upon them, *they ſhall confeſs their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, with their treſpaſſes which they treſpaſſed againſt Me, and that alſo they have walked contrary unto Me, if then their uncircumciſed hearts be humbled and they then accept of the Puniſhment of their iniquity, then will I remember My Covenant with Jacob, and alſo My Covenant with Iſaac, and alſo My Covenant with Abraham will I remember, and I will remember the Land.* But He ſaith alſo in the ſame Chapter, *if ye will not be reformed by Me by theſe things but will walk contrary unto Me, then will I alſo walk contrary unto you, and will Puniſh you yet ſeven times more for your ſins.* Verſe 23. 24.

Now to draw to a cloſe, let us make an Application of all. We have diſcovered, the cauſe of all our malladies and diſeaſes, and the true proper way of cureing them; what remains then, but that we preſently with all profitable care and ſpeed, look to our ſelvs and take that courſe which is abſolutely neceſſary for our ſafety. If there be any particular Perſons here, groaning under the weight of any trouble, diſeaſed in Body, or diſtreſſed

diſtreſſed in fortune, or any other wayes afflicted; Let me beſeech them as they wiſh there own well, to ſearch freely there wayes, and to labour to find out that accurſed thing, which they are guilty of, and which provoks GODS anger againſt them: And when they have found their guilt, let me alſo beſeech them not to hide the ſame, by excuſing & extenuating it; But to make an humble and *Ingenuous Confeſſion* unto GOD, and to teſtifie an *unfeigned repentance*, by a ſincere care to bring forth the fruits *meet for repentance*; Let them rectifie what they have done amiſs, and make an amends for their paſt negligence, by an exact diligence hereafter to keep all the *Commandments of GOD*: Which if they do I may aſſure them, that *GOD* will no longer hide *his face* and *favour* from them; he will no more frown, but ſmile, and give them *comfortable words*, that they may be made to rejoice for the dayes wherein they have ſeen affliction.

In the nixt place, I would make Application, to the *publick State of this Nation* and *Kingdom*, whereof we are members, and in whoſe welfare *Religion* and *Intereſt* oblige us to be concerned. I think it needs ſurprize none, if I ſay, *That GOD is angry with us*, and that *his judgements are hanging over theſe lands*, for who is ſo blind as not to ſee it? The preſent bad

Harveſt

Harveſt is one inſtance: the evil threatned in the tenth verſe, we may ſay is *literally* like to be inflicted upon us, *He is pouring down his wrath upon us by water*; which threatens to waſh away the food both of Man and beaſt. What other Calamities are impending either on *Church* or *State*, I leave to the conſideration of wiſe Perſons. But without danger, or the imputation of indiſcretion, I may bid you read the *ſins of the land*, and by that foreſee what is to be feared. It would be no great ſtretch, tho I ſhould offer to draw a parallel betwixt the ſins that abound amongſt us, and theſe of *Judah* and *Iſrael* complained of in this propheſie; and would one charge the ſeveral Ranks and Orders amongſt us, with the ſame Faults our Prophet layes upon the *Prieſts*, the *Rulers*, and *Princes* and *People* of his time, no great injury would be done to truth: But ſuch an unuſual freedom, perhaps would not be well taken, eſpecially from a Stranger. But certainly it is a kindneſs to give warning of a common danger, and its the duty of all to provide for our Common Safety. Thô we would flatter our ſelves, it would not go better with us. Was *Judah* and *Iſrael* puniſhed becauſe they would not frame their doings to turn unto the *Lord*, and do we think to eſcape? If we imitate their ſins, is there not reaſon to fear a being made to ſhare in the like judgements? Is *God* arilen

arisen to *Judgement*? Is He going through the World, with the *Rod of His wrath in His hand*, visiting *Nations* for their *Iniquities*: and do we think that we will not have our turn? That he will pass by us, when we are as guilty as any other, no so long as sin thus continues and increases amongst us, it will never be well with us; our state shall still move from evil to worse. If then we would either prevent the evils which are yet a coming, or heal the wounds already received, let us join our endeavours to stop the current of sin and Iniquity, and to cleanse the Land of the Abominations that are amongst us. Its of little avail to apply external Plaisters, while the arrow head sticks in the wound. In this and the former Ages, the People of these Lands have been ever crying out of Grievances, but they have had little of the Spirit of Discerning, to find out the great cause and ground of them, *viz.* Their Sins and Transgressions against GOD; For which if they had heartily grieved, they had never had so much matter of making other Complaints. In our Fathers dayes, all the fault was laid upon the Government, and Governours in Church and State, which through the instigation of Factious and Seditious Men, made People restless until they had overturned the Government, and thrust the chief Ruler, and perhaps best of Men not only from His *Throne*, but out of

of the World in a moſt barbarous manner: but as this encreaſed their guilt, ſo it did not heal their ſores, nor eaſe their pain; they rather felt more ſmart and grief, which diſpoſed them to *ſeek again unto David their King.* And if together with that, the People had ſeriouſly *ſought the Lord* alſo, all had been well. But alace, that is yet to do! whatever Change and Revolution we have ſuffered, there has never been cordial Endeavours, to introduce that beſt and moſt deſirable Change from Vice to Vertue, from ſin to Holineſs and Godlineſs. Bleſſed be GOD there has been a *Reformation* in our *Doctrine*, and our *Worſhip* has been rectified and purged from the *ſuperſtition* and *idolatry* which had creeped into it, through the *ignorance* and *unwarrineſs of Men:* But to our ſhame it muſt be ſaid, that our *practiſe* and *converſation* is not Reformed, but continues much the ſame, and perhaps in ſomethings worſe than what was before that other happy Reformation of Doctrine and Worſhip came in. There was certainly reaſon to deſcry and run down the *Hypocriſie* and *forms of Godlineſs* faſhionable in the late times, but it had been more commendable to have endeavoured with greater Vigour to ſet up the Life and Power thereof. And would to GOD we were at laſt ſenſible of our errour and omiſſion, and convinced that hitherto we have very unskilfully ſet about the curing our Maladies.

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O that all who profeſs the ſame Truth, would be perſwaded to lay aſide all other contests, and to contend together for maintaining the purity of the Faith, and joyning therewith the Puritie of Life and Practiſe. If we would thus by *True Piety*, and *Sincere Obedience* return unto the *Lord*, he would return unto us and put us in a happy and glorious ſtate; as *he hath torne*, ſo *he would heal us*, as *he hath ſmitten*, ſo *he will bind us up*, *that we might live joyfully in his ſight*. But if this be neglected or delayed, and if inſtead of this we take Methods and Devices of our own for ſaving our ſelves. I dare not ſay what is to be feared, Judgements of all ſorts, we may expect to be viſited in our Worldly concerns; and thoſe two ſadder Calamities which are mentioned; *Amos* 8. 11. 2 *Theſſ.* 2. 11, 12. may be looked for, which GOD avert; *Plead with your mother, plead*, ſaith GOD, by this Prophet, *for ſhe is not my wife, neither am I her husband, let her therefore put away her whoredoms out of her ſight, and her adulteries from between her breaſts, leſt I ſtrip her naked, and ſet her as in the day ſhe was born, and make her as a wilderneſs, and ſet her like a dry land, and ſlay her with thirſt. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit ſaith unto the Churches.* AMEN.

THE

THE VII.

SERMON

ON

MICAH, *Chap.* 7. *Ver:* 8, 9.

Preached in St Giles Church, April 13. 1690.

Verſe 8. *Rejoyce not againſt me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I ſhall ariſe; when I ſit in darkneſs, the LORD ſhall be a light unto me.*

Verſe 9. *I will bear the indignation of the LORD, becauſe I have ſinned againſt Him, untill He plead my cauſe, and execute judgement for me: He will bring me forth to the light, and I ſhall behold His righteouſneſs.*

THE Prophet ſpeaks here in the Name of the *Church*, and with reſpect to her preſent circumſtances, and what was ſhortly to befal her. Her preſent condition was very ſad, and lamentable, if you conſider her *inward conſtitution*, there was no health nor ſoundneſs in her; but much Diſorder, Confuſion, and Corruption, as is complained of throughout the whole Book; but which is expreſly declared and ſet forth in this Chapter, from the 1 to the 6 verſe. This *ſickneſs* and *inward diſtemper* could not be

without grievous pangs and convulsive fitts: But besides they were lying under sad pressures from without; the *Assyrians* oppressed them, and by frequent inroads, wasted their wealth, and made great Devastations of their Country; The *Ten Tribes* were already carried captive, and the captivity of the other *Two*, together with the destruction of the *glorious Temple* of *Solomon* were approaching. The Prophet being sensible of what had already happened; and foreseeing by the Spirit what was to come, he doth here in name of the Church obviate these misconstructions, Men would be ready to put on this her deplorable condition; and also instruct how it was to be received and entertained; The *Idumeans*, *Chaldeans*, and *Babylonians*, and other Enemies without, who envied the former Prosperity of *Israel*, were glad at these Disasters and Calamities which befell them, they rejoyced at their misery; they took occasion to mock them, saying, *Where is now the GOD in whom they trusted?* Who had saved them heretofore, and done so many great things for them in *Egypt?* Thus instead of *fearing GOD*, and *trembling at his judgements*, he had inflicted on His own People for their sins, they made them matter of profane mirth and laughter, and not understanding the Wisdom and Justice of His dispensations, they even accused *GOD Himself*, and darted up blasphemous

speeches

ſpeeches towards Heaven. But the Prophet bids them here *be ſober*, and adviſeth them *to moderate their mirth*, and to *lay aſide their profane and inſulting humour*: for things would not alwayes be at this paſs, GOD would not alwayes deal ſo roughly and harſhly with them; Experience taught them not to deſpair, but to hope for the recovery of a better ſtate: *Rejoyce not againſt me, O mine enemy*, as if he had ſaid, "Make not my calamities and "diſaſters the ſubject of your mirth and "laughter, which ſhould rather ſtrike you "with dread and fear, for if we the peculiar "People of GOD, whom he had choſen for "Himſelf, have ſuffered ſuch things becauſe "we ſinned againſt him, what may ye expect "who were never in Covenant with Him, and "who have alwayes provocked Him? Neither inſult over us as if we were utterly and "eternally ruined, and that it were impoſ-"ſible for us ever to recover, ſo as to deſerve "any regard from you." Common *humanity* ſhould teach People to *pity one another*, and to have *compaſſion on the miſerable*: And if ye conſult experience, it will ſhew that all perſons, and all things under the *Sun* are lyable to changes, that there is none ſo exalted, but he may be abaſed, nor any ſo low, but he may be exalted:

Nemo confidat nimium ſecundis,
Nemo deſperet meliora lapſus.

None can secure his State, and therefore the most Happy and Prosperous ought not to bragge; Nor should the most abject and miserable despond and give over hope. None stands so secure but he may catch a fall, nor is any fallen so low, but GOD by His Providence is able to raise him up again. And as for me (to go on with the Prophets words) *when I fall I shall rise*, or as it may be rendred, *though I fall I shall arise*. As if he had said, "Think "not my case desperate, or that I have so "fallen that I cannot recover; I am not des- "titute of Hope, for as low and miserable "as I am at present. My GOD abideth still, "who is Almighty to save, whose Hand is "strong and always ready to relieve the dis- "tressed. T'is true He is at present angry "with me, but His anger will not last always, "He doth not cast off for ever; His Mercy "is everlasting, and I know His Promise can- "not fail, which is, *if they break My Statutes "and keep not My Commandments, then will I visite "their Transgression with the Rod and their Iniqui- "ty with Stripes, nevertheless my loving kindness "will I not take from him, nor suffer My Faithful- "ness to fail.* I have had often experience of "this kind dealing of His, *I have fallen and I "have risen again*". 'Tis so in the Original and though there be nothing more ordinary than the promiscuous using the *Preterite* & *future tenses*, so that our Translators might very well render

render it here in the *future*, yet ſome render it *I have fallen, I have riſen*, as if the *Jewiſh Church* or the Prophet in her Name had gathered Hope from Experience, and ſaid to her inſulting Enemy; "Conclude not me utterly loſt "& irrecoverable becauſe *God* hath brought "me low; look back to the times paſt, and "conſider that GOD never left me to Periſh, "that as He viſited me with His Rod, ſo He "alwayes ſhewed me His Salvation. I truſt "He will do ſo now, and in the mean time *when* or *while I ſit in Darkneſs, the LORD will be a Light unto me*" *Darkneſs* in Scripture language ſignifies Trouble and Affliction, and *Light* is put for joy and comfort. And ſo the Prophet by this expreſſion, declares his aſſurance, *that GOD would afford His People ſeaſonable tokens of his favour*, even in the midſt of their tribulations, for the comfort of their hearts, and the ſupport of their minds, until the time of their Deliverance come. Now the Prophet having thus anſwered the profane ſcoffs and mockings of the *Heathens* about them. In the next place he draweth his Peoples thoughts more home, and requireth them to look into themſelves, and to conſider their *own hearts and wayes*, inſtead of theſe miſconſtructions of the *Divine judgements*, by men unacquainted with *His wayes*: And whatever their Enemies ſaid, he himſelf reſolves and teacheth the reſt of his People, to take all theſe

cau-

calamities and afflictions from *GOD*, as the effects of His displeasure, and the punishment of their sins, to which they should submit, and which they ought to bear patiently. *I will*, saith he, *bear the indignation of the LORD, because I have sinned against Him.* And as their calamities were thus to be received and entertained, so he encourageth to it, by a promise that they should be but for a time, and that thereafter *GOD would plead their cause, and execute judgement for them*, that is, "Defend and "vindicate them, right their wrongs, repay "their injuries, and do justice on those who "had been the instruments of their misery, "he would set them at liberty, and restore "them to their prosperity and glory, which "is meant by bringing them to the light. And then to their great comfort and joy, they should *behold, and understand his righteousness*; that is, That he is *just and righteous in all his wayes, true and faithful in his promises, and wonderfull in all he doth*, as *David* said, *I know, O Lord, that all thy judgements are right, and that out of faithfulness Thou hast afflicted me*, *Ps.* 119. 75.

Thus I have explained and cleared the Text, and shown you the occasion, sense, and scope thereof.

I proceed next, to draw such Observations and Instructions as the words afford, and as are useful and proper for our consideration.

And

And first, to rejoice at the Calamities and Afflictions of others, and to insult over them who are in Misery, is a sign of a profane and ungodly Spirit. They who rejoiced at the calamities of the *Israelites*, were the *Idumeans*, *Chaldeans*, and *Babylonians*, who were no greater Enemies to them, than they were to GOD and the true Religion. And *Psal.* 69. 26. among other Characters of the Wicked this is one; That, *they persecute him whom thou hast smitten, and talk to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded.* When *Job* declareth his Integrity, he giveth this as one proof thereof, That, *he rejoiced not at the destruction of him that hated him, nor lift up his soul when evil found him. Neither* (saith he) *have I suffered my mouth to sin, by wishing a curse to his soul.* Job. 31. 29, 30. To make GOD's Judgements on others though Enemies, a matter of laughter, doth very much bewray a want of the Spirit of GOD, and is inconsistent both with the true Fear of GOD, and that Love and Concernedness for others, which Religion requires and inspireth. Who truely fear GOD will tremble to see Him Angry, though it be not against themselves but others; *Psal.* 25. When the destruction of the wicked is fortold, it is said that the Righteous shall see and fear, *ver.* 6. And accordingly the Prophet *Habbakuk* foreseeing the Evils and Calamities that were to light upon the tents of *Cushan*, and the land of *Midian*, was

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ſo far from rejoicing and inſulting thereat, that he tells us, *when I heard, my Belly trembled, my lips quivered at the voice, rottenneſs entred into my bones, & I trembled in my fleſh*; Hab. 3. 16. Indeed it is added in the forecited 52. *Pſ.* that *the righteous ſhal alſo laugh:* And *Pſalm* 58. 10: it is ſaid, *the righteous ſhall rejoyce when he ſeeth the vengeance.* But hereby is meant, that as the righteous is careful to remarke all the Acts of the *Divine Providence*; & in particular his examplary puniſhments on notoriouſly wicked perſons, ſo he will applaude the Juſtice and Equity of them, and he will be glade to ſee ſuch evident and convincing proofs of a *Deity*, and *Providence*, for ſilencing the *Atheiſt*, and reſtraining the *wickedneſs of men*: though ſtill his joy is mixed with a ſecret regrate at the occaſion, and ſuch an aweful apprehenſion of the *power and juſtice of GOD*, as forbids him to mock at the effects and expreſſions of his diſpleaſure; Even as a wiſe and good Citizen rejoyceth at the good government of his City, and finds a ſatisfaction in the procedure and execution of Juſtice, which are too grave and important to be mocked at.

Again, the rejoycing at the calamities of others is inconſiſtent with the *Spirit of Religion*, which is a *ſpirit of love* and *humility*, and which requireth the greateſt love and ſympathy, that can be among Men; Its precepts are, *love your enemies, bleſs them that curſe you, do good to them*

them that hate you, and pray for them that perse-cute you and despitefully use you. Rejoice with them that rejoice, and weep with them that weep. If thine enemy hunger feed him, if he thirst give him drink. Now how litle do they observe these precepts, and how little have they of that Spirit which enjoins them, who can contrive and work mischief to their Brethren, and when it falls on them behold it with Pleasure? We may say to such, what our Saviour said to His Disciples who would have been calling for fire from Heaven on these who would not receive them, *you know not what manner of Spirit you are of.* The miseries and distresses of others call for Pity and Compassion; And one must have put off very much of the Man, who draweth pleasure from the miseries and afflictions of other Men, though Enemies. Our Saviour knew the wickedness of *Jerusalem*, and that he was to be Crucified therein, yet as he drew nigh to it, *he wept over it* by reason of these sad Calamities which were coming upon it. It was *Davids* Interest that *Saul* was dead, yet he did not rejoice at his death, but because the manner thereof was deplorable he mourned for him. As it makes *Herodias* infamous that she rejoyced to see the head of *John Baptist* in a Charger; so it is recorded to the comendation of *Alexander* and *Julius Cæsar*, that neither of them insulted over the defeate and distress of their Enemies; The first was

touched

touched with compassion, when *Darius* his Mother, Wife and Children, were taken Prisoners, and brought to him, and afterwards when *Darius* himself was killed. And the other wept when *Pompeys* head was brought to him. I know some charge these tears of *Cesar* with *hypocrisy*, seeing he was the Man who pursued *Pompey* to death; But who knows, but the Bowels of Nature at that time overcame his Malice Ambition and other Passions.

3*ly*. They who insult and rejoyce in this wise, are Ignorant of themselves, and also of the end of these Divine Judgements, They cannot know they are Sinners, and that others are so and so Punished in their sight, to fill them with *fear* & to lead them to *repentance*, otherwise they would make other uses thereof, and behave themselves otherwise thereat. When the Master takes out some Boys to be whipt, is it to give mirth to the rest? or is it not, that they may stand in aw of him, and forbear these things which may bring the *rod* on their back; When any *criminal* is laid hold on, and brought to publick Punishment, should they who are equally guilty, stand by and laugh either at the Misfortune of their fellow, or the Execution of Justice? What stupidity were this! Should they not take warning and fear and forsake these wayes which are attended with such shame & pain! When some told our *Saviour* of these *Galileans* whose

whose Blood *Pilate* mingled with there Sacrifices, he answered them; *Suppose ye these Galileans were Sinners above all others*, because they suffered such things, *I tell you nay, but except ye Repent ye shall all likewise Perish.* Luke 13. 1. And in truth they who set light of the afflictions of others, and entertain the Rods on other Mens backs with Scorn and Derision, shall hardly escape themselves *Laugh no Man to scorn in the bitterness of his Soul, for there is one who humbleth and exhaleth*, saith the wise Son of *Syrach*, *Eccles.* 7. 11. And *Solomon* whose words have yet greater weight, saith *whoso mocketh the Poor, reproacheth his Maker, and he that is glad at Calamities shall not be unpunished*, Pro. 17. 5. So the Prophet *Habbakuk* saith that he was Humbled at these disasters of *Midian* and *Cushan*, that he himself *might rest in the day of trouble.* Who wisely & seriously consider the instability of humane affairs, will neither be lifted up with their own prosperity, nor will they insult over their Neighbours misery: For what is the ones case to Day may be the others to Morrow. Who at present braves it out with Pride and Scorn, may within a little come to be contemptible.

Quem dies vidit veniens superbum,
Hunc dies vidit fugiens jacentem,
Res Deus nostras celeri citatas
turbine versat.

Secondly, We see here that the Church and

and People of GOD are often visited with the Rod of Afflictions. The Text declareth it, and who doubt it, let them read the History of the Church, and they shall be fully convinc'd. As for the *Jewish* Church, 'twas first sadly oppress'd in *Egypt*, and thereafter for the space of Fourty Years 'twas exercised in a barren *Wilderness* with diverse kinds of Afflictions. After they came to *Canaan* during the time of the *Judges* they were often brought low. They had Peace a part of *Davids* & all *Solomons* life; but afterwards it was continually interrupted, till they were carried Captive to *Babylon*. When they were brought back, and restored to their own Land, they were not settled without hot Debates and Contests with their Neighbours; and after their settlement, they had severe Wars, and were kept in continual exercise with diverse sore troubles until *Christ*, as appears from *Josephus* and the History of the *Maccabees*. And as for the *Christian* Church, trouble sprang up with it, and continually attended it; for the space of 300 Years it suffered ten severe general Persecutions, besides many sad particular Conflicts. And though after that the Emperours and Rulers turned *Christian*, there was no general Persecution for the *Name of Christ*, and the sake of the *Gospel*; yet there was no particular Church or People without the Rod of Correction: They have been visited either

ther with Forraign Wars, or Inteſtine Diviſions; with Peſtilence or Famine, or ſome other Calamity. No Nation or People can boaſt of an immunity from ſuch Diſaſters, but for the ſpace of one Hundred Years. As Man in his private Capacity, ſo States and Societies are born to Trouble: Nor is an exemption from the ſame among the Priviledges of the People of *God*. The *Roman Church* makes *temporal felicity* one of the *notes* of the *true Church*. But her *infallibity* appears as little here as in other things: For as it is no where promiſed in Scripture, ſo no Church can *de facto* ſhew it; She her ſelf would fail if ſhe were put to prove her ſelf the *True Church* by this, for where was her *Temporal Felicity*, when *Rome* it ſelf was ſacked, and the *Pope* ſhut up in Priſon. Calamities and Afflictions do indeed indicate that they who ſuffer them are Sinners: But they do not prove them to be Reprobats and Caſt-awayes, for the People of GOD may expect them as well as others, nay, they may look for them more than others, becauſe GOD is more jealous of them, and his glory is more concerned to Puniſh Sin in them.

Thirdly, We may obſerve here, that even when GOD is moſt provocked, to lay on His afflicting Hand and to Puniſh, he doth not forbear to ſhew Kindneſs; And that in the extreameſt

extreamest misery, there is still ground to Hope in GOD for a deliverance. None ever provoked GOD more, then the People of *Israel* and *Judah* in the dayes to which this Prophecy refers, nor did any Peoples case look more desperate then theirs, when carried Captive by the King of *Assyria*: And yet you see here, that the Prophet in regard to them then, saith, *when I fall, I shall rise, when I sit in Darkness the LORD shall be a light unto me.* As GOD casts down with one Hand, He lifts up with another.

Sæpe premente Deo fert Deus alter opem.

Thus when He cast the *Israelites* out of their own land, he made them to find favour with the People among whom they were dispersed. GOD wisely tempereth His Punishments, so that while they vindicat His Holiness and Justice, they also serve to manifest His Mercy and Good-will. GOD hath no Pleasure in wickedness, and therefore when He seeth it, He Punisheth it; But all His hatred being against the Crime and not the Person, therefore He Saveth and Comforteth them, and maketh their very Afflictions tend to their Good, unless they have made themselves altogether incorrigible, and have hardned their hearts against all His methods, and then indeed He gives them up to Destruction. When he sees it necessary to withdraw external and Worldly comforts, he doubles *inward*

and

and *spiritual consolations.* So the Prophet *Isaiah* having denounced judgements against *Israel*, he addeth, *And therefore will the Lord waite that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you. And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of Affliction; yet shall not thy Teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shal see thy teachers; and thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, this is the way walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left, Isa.* 30. 18. The felicity of the Soul, is to be preferred to the welfare of the Body; and Spiritual consolations to worldly advantages: Now because ordinarly people are insensible of the former, and indisposed to receive them while the latter abound with them; Therefore he takes away this, that they may seek the other, and be capable of them; so that we really gain by our losses, and *our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,* 2 Cor. 4. 17. Thus it is said, Hos. 2. 14. *Therefore behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her, and I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope, and she shall sing there as in the dayes of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt.* These words shew that GOD comforteth His People

People in their Afflictions, and therefore afflicteth them that he may make them ſenſible of his Kindneſs, and have occaſion to ſpeak comfortably to them; As alſo that in due time he will deliver them, and make them to rejoice for the dayes wherein they have been afflicted. *It is good that a Man ſhould both hope and quietly wait for the ſalvation of the Lord.* Lam. 3. 29. There is alwayes ground to hope, and never reaſon to deſpair, be our condition never ſo low, perplext and troubled: For he is Omnipotent in Power, and Infinit in Goodneſs, and can do for us above what we either can ask or think. When all Humane Help faileth, there is Help in GOD, and then He uſeth to Help and Deliver, when Relief can be expected no where elſe, that we may know it his doing, and that he only may have the Praiſe and Glory. Thus he delivered *Joſeph* when all the World had forgotten him. He ſaved *Moſes* when his Parents could hide him no longer. He redeemed His People, when *Pharoah* exerciſed the greateſt cruelty towards them; and always when they were loweſt and moſt oppreſſed by their enemies he raiſed up deliverers for them; and he returned this Captivity when there was leaſt apperance of it, and when it was not ſo much as thought upon, except by ſome few who remembred and believed the Promiſe by the Mouth of *Jeremiah*, Chap. 25. 12. So likewiſe when the

the Perſecutions againſt the *Chriſtians* came to be bittereſt, he always brought about a mitigation and relentment. And when the *tenth*, and laſt under *Diocletian*, which was the ſevereſt had proceeded ſo far that 'twas thought the name of *Chriſtianity* was quite extinct, and accordingly *trophies* were erected for it; he firſt turned the Heart of *Conſtantius Chlorus*, to protect *Chriſtians*, and thereafter raiſed up *Conſtantine the Great*, who not only gave them full liberty, but made the *Chriſtian Religion*, the *dominant Religion* of the Empire.

Fourthly, We learn hence how to receive, how to entertain, and how to improve all theſe calamities and afflictions which befall us, ſo that they may turn to our good, and become means of reconciling us to GOD. The Peophet teacheth us this, by his own example, when he ſaith, *I will bear the indignation of the LORD, becauſe I have ſinned againſt him:* Which teacheth us, firſt, to receive all our evils and troubles as from the hand of GOD. And indeed there is no *evil in the city which the LORD hath not done*, *Amos* 3. 6. Who ever or what ever be the inſtrument, he is the Author; He cannot indeed be the Author of the evil of ſin, but he is alwayes that of puniſhment; He orders, diſpoſeth, and determines all that falleth out in the World. What ever diſpoſition there be in Men, Devils, or any creature to miſchief, yet they cannot ſtirr or

move, but when they are allowed, and as they are directed: As in a well disciplined Army, the Souldiers go not out on any expedition, but when they are commanded. So *Joseph* ascribed to GOD his being sold into *Ægypt*, though it was through the malice and envy of his Brethren. And *Job* acknowledged GOD the Author of all his disasters, though some were committed by the *Sabeans* and *Chaldeans*; *The LORD*, saith he, *gave, and the LORD hath taken away, blessed be the Name of the LORD.* *Secondly*, As we are here taught to acknowledge GOD the Authour of our afflictions and calamities, so our sins the cause and occasion of them. *When GOD corrects Man, it is always for iniquity*; For he is more righteous then to punish when there is no fault; *He doth not grieve the Children of Men willingly, nor afflict them*; and therefore when he doth it, it is because they have sinned against him, and consequently who are afflicted should acknowledge their sins which have kindled the indignation of the LORD against them: So doth *Daniel*, *chap.* 9. 5, 6, 7, 8. *verses.* *Thirdly*, To bear the indignation of the LORD, is to suffer patiently without murmuring. A thing may be imposed on a Man, but he cannot be said to bear it who doth it not wilingly, and he doth not bear it willingly, who frets murmures and complains. And *why should a living Man complain, a Man for the Punishment of his Sins,*

Sins, *Lam.* 3. 39. Would it be reasonable in a criminal to accuse or murmure against the Judge for giving out sentence, when it was yet less then his Crimes deserve; Now certainly no Man suffers or can suffer in this life so much as his Sins merite. *Furthermore*, saith the Apostle, *we had Fathers of our flesh who corrected us, and we gave them reverence, shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? Heb.* 12. 9. *Fourthly*, To bear the Indignation of the LORD because of sin, implies a hearty greif for it, and a real turning from it. He that is sensible that the evils he suffers, are the Effects of GODS displeasure for his sins, cannot but have a remorse for them; and if he have a true remorse for them, he will also abandon them, and shew all care to serve GOD better: Untill we do so, we never accept the Punishment of our sins. They despise the rod, who do not amend, neither become more dutiful by it. And such shall bring greater Punishment upon them. But who thus receiveth and useth their chastisement, shall be eased and delivered; *He will plead their cause, and execute Judgement for them, and bring them forth to the light. Humble your selves therefore under the Mighty hand of GOD, that he may exalt you in due time*, 1 *Pet.* 5. 6.

The last *Observation* I shal draw from the words is, that when these *Divine Dispensations*, I mean the Afflictions and Calamities which befal his

People, are well considered and rightly understood, there will be found much righteousness in them. There is too much pronness in Men to censure the actions of *Providence*, which speaks out the greatest rashness and presumption imaginable; For what are we? Where is either our Authority or Capacity, that we should take upon us to canvass the Actions of the Almighty, or to rectify the contrivances & determinations of *Infinite Wisdome!* A Child is fitter to pass Judgement on the Actings of a wise understanding Man, and a dull Country Clown may with less arrogance examine the maximes of a *Matchiavel*, and other famous Politicians; *Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right!* said *Abraham*, *Gen.* 18. 24. Certainly he cannot but do it, he can do nothing amiss: But indeed to illustrate this, and to make out the Righteousness of his particular Providences, is for the most part above humane reach: For as the Psalmist saith, *Thy way is in the Sea, and thy path in the great Waters, and thy footsteps are not known*, *Psal.* 77. 19. *O the depths*, saith the Apostle, *of the riches both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of GOD! How unsearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways past finding out! Rom.* 11. 33. But when they are found and discovered, they will appear most Righteous. *He hath made every thing beautiful in his time*, saith *Solomon*, *also he hath set the world in their hearts, so that no Man can find*

find out the work that GOD maketh from the beginning to the end. Eccl. 3 11. Look the best peice of Arras on the backside, and its handsomness will not appear: Nor will the beauty of the finest *Picture* be known unless it be set in a due light. So we cannot understand the Righteousness of GODS Providence without knowing the reason and ends thereof. And these are often hid from us, till the event declare them; And then we are forced to approve and applaud what before we were ready to condemn. As Fines, Imprisonments, and other Punishments are necessary to a *Common Wealth*, so Calamities, Troubles, and Afflictions, are now necessary to the world. By them GOD keeps up his Authority, defends his Laws, curbs Sin, prevents some from going astray, and reclaimes others who have already erred from the ways of His Commandments. Hereby he exercises His Peoples Vertue, Integrity, Faith, Patience, and other Graces, and makes them to Acquire, the Grouth, Stature, Vigour, and Understanding of perfect Men, which they would not do if softness and ease and plenty were always indulged them. As winds serve to Purify the Air, and Frost, and Snow, and Rain, to Moisten and Fatten the Earth, that it may be Fruitful; so GOD sendeth Calamities, and Afflictions, that they who are barren may be made to bear fruit, and that others may bring

forth more fruit, if an ignorant and unskilful Person saw a Gardiner pruning his Trees, and loppingof theBranches with Axes andKnives, he would perhaps suspect him of madness, or think he intended the destruction of the Garden: Whereas he thereby prevents their overgrowing and undoing one another, and renders his Garden both more comely and more profitable. So GOD by afflictions prunes his People, he keeps down these corruptions and disorders which otherwise would break out amongst them, and disposeth them to bear proper fruit in their season. *It is good for me that I was afflicted said David*: the *Psalmist* was once tempted to think that GOD was unkind to His Church and People because he Afflicted them: But on second thoughts he checks himself, & concludes, that *Truely GOD is good to Israel even to such as are of a clean heart*, *Psal.* 73. 1. That is such dealing with his People do not prove that he has no kindness for them: For He is still good to them, and their afflictions testify it and such as are of a clean heart shall certainly find it so.

Now seing these things are so, let us not complain of the present Providence of GOD; let us not murmure against, nor bear impatiently these evils which are upon us: For we have truly sinned against GOD, and he doth justly Punish us, what ever may be said of

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of many of the Instruments of our trouble and calamity. I must not flatter you, certainly our Princes our Nobles, and great ones, the Pastors and People, and all ranks amongst us, have corrupted themselves, and done wickedly, and therefore GOD hath justly brought evil upon our land; And who have smarted by this revolution, have suffered justly at the hands of GOD. Let us therefore humble our selves before Him, acknowldge our offence, and the Justice and Righteousness of His Judgements, and then He will be ready to plead our cause. I beseech you in the words of *Hosea. O! Israel return unto the LORD thy GOD, for thou has faln by thine iniquity, take with you words, and turn to the LORD, say unto Him, take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously, so will we render the Calves of our Lips*; and then we shall hear Him saying, *I will heal your backsliding, I will love them freely; for mine anger is turned away from him.* And as he saith in another place, *Come and let us return unto the Lord, for he hath torn, and he will heal us, he hath smitten, and he will bind us up.*

And as this is the only proper Advice for our selves, so I would advise those to whom the present times seem a little more favourable, I mean, *Our Brethren of the Presbyterian party*, whom I call Brethren, though their usage and treatement of us have shewed them Enemies; I say, I would advise them

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need be over vain and confident, for they know not *what a day may bring forth.*

To rejoyce at our Affliction, and to insult over our misery, doth not savour much of Religion, to which they make so high pretences: And unless they could chain their present state by irreversible decrees; there is as little prudence as Religion in despising us thus, and trampling so much upon us: For it may come to pass, that they may yet be forced to seek shelter under the shadow of our Vine. It is not long since another Party, *viz.* the *Papists* boasted and bragged, and aimed too at more than was fit or meet, or what Discretion would have required, which brought on their ruine, and which has occasioned their loss of that peace which otherwise they might and would have enjoyed. *Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.* I believe, *that thou shalt arise, O LORD, and have mercy upon Zion, when the time to favour her, when the set time is come.* Though our case were more desperate in the eyes of the world, yet I would not despair, thô we were at a lower pass, and had fewer Friends, I yet would not quite hope; for *GOD is able to do for us above what we can ask or think.* Its true, we have provocked the LORD, and thô he leave us we cannot complain; But we know also, that our *GOD is Merciful, and with him is plenteous Redemption. He will not cast off for ever.* Therefore

fore *they who are his people ſhould ſtill hope in him*; and we are *His people* as much as any other can pretend to; we are bound to him by Covenant, by the *Covenant of Baptiſm, and the Sacrament of the* LORDS *Supper*, which are more ſacred ties, than any of Mans making. If therefore we return to the LORD, and acknowledge our Offence, He will have Mercy upon us, and ſurely viſit us with His Salvation. We may take up this hope both by our own experience, and the experience of others. Have we not fallen heretofore? and have we not riſen again? Have we not ſeen the *Church* invaded, her Order demoliſhed, her Paſtors exiled, her Temples profaned, her Beauty defac'd! And have we not ſeen all theſe repair'd and reſtor'd again? Is there any thing impoſſible unto GOD? Can He not ſuddenly alter the ſecureſt State, and put a ſtop to the moſt violent Carreer? *ANNO*, 58, and 59, neither *King* nor *Royal Family* durſt be owned, and then it was a capital Crime to Pray for them? And yet you all know that within a year or two *Our King*, was wonderfully reſtored without Sword and without Bow; and even they who had Baniſhed him were forced to concurr in the calling him back; *This was the Lords doing*, and *it was* then *wonderful in our eyes*. Now He that was able to do this, what is He not able to do? *The ſtone which the builders have refuſed*, *He has made become*

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the Head-ſtone of the Corner. And ſo He may cauſe them who are at this time rejected, as *Gibeonites* and *Samaritans* (ſo one was pleas'd lately to term the *Epiſcopal Clergy*) to be courted and received as chief Builders of the Temple. People may come to be convinc'd that their preſent prejudice and averſion are unreaſonable, ſo that Love, Reſpect, and Goodwill may take place inſtead thereof. Now when theſe who have ſtated themſelves our Enemies ſhall ſee this, what will they ſay? Shall I ſay, as it follows our Text, *Shame ſhall cover them*? GOD forbid! that we ſhould wiſh any other ſhame to them, than that of Penitents and Converts, which is profitable for themſelves, and acceptable unto others. Far be it from us to wiſh or contrive any perſons Confuſion, or to harbour thoughts of revenge, *we have not ſo learned Chriſt*. GOD forbid! that we ſhould wiſh any thing, ſave the Glory of GOD, the Peace of the Church, and the Common good of all; and in order unto theſe, the promoting of Truth, the retriving true Piety, the eſtabliſhing a decent reaſonable Worſhip, and a comely Order, and good Government. Though our Sins hinder theſe Bleſſings at preſent; yet we hope GOD will ſometime grant them. And that it may be ſo; let us frequently addreſs Him by hearty and ſerious Prayers; and eſpecially let us ſtudy to pleaſe him by a Holy and Upright Converſa-

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tion. *Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father, who hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope, through grace, comfort your hearts, and establish you in every good word and work.* AMEN.

THE

THE EIGHT SERMON.

A PREPARATION to the HOLY COMMUNION.

ON

HEBREWS, *Chap.* 10. *Verſ.* 22.

Let us draw near with a true Heart, in full Aſſurance of Faith, having our Hearts ſprinkled from an evil Conſcience, and our Bodies waſhed with pure Water.

THESE words are an inference or concluſion drawn from a Doctrine formerly delivered, as appears from the *illative particle Therefore* in the 19*th.* Verſe: And there you have alſo the Summe of the Doctrine it ſelf, *viz: That there is now free acceſs unto GOD through Jeſus Chriſt*, which the *Apoſtle* declareth in figural expreſſions, with an alluſion to the *Jewiſh Temple* not only becauſe he was writing to *Hebrews*, but alſo becauſe that Temple and the way of entering thereinto was a *Type* of this *great Truth*, which is revealed by the Goſpel. *That Jeſus Chriſt*

Christ is a true and the only Mediatour betwixt GOD and Man, that by Him Men may confidently draw near to GOD, and hope for acceptance; St. *Paul* has asserted and endeavoured to make out in the former part of this *Epistle*, and indeed he hath proved and made it most evident, so that there can remain no doubt thereof, except in these who obstruct and do not desire their own conviction. Now the proper and practical Improvement of this certain important, and most desirable truth, is what you have in the words of our Text, for they contain an *Exhortation* to lay hold on this gracious priviledge; and with all they shew us how, and after what manner we should do it, so as to obtaine it.

I shall first speak to the *Exhortation* it self, next of the *Qualities* here required of such as designe to comply with the *Exhortation*, and last make application of all to the present business of the *Sacrament*.

To begin then with the *Exhortation*, which is in these words, *let us draw near*. What or whom we should draw near, is not here expreſt, but is to be gathered from what goeth before, whereby we understand that it is GOD whom we are here desired to draw near. And seeing it is so, by drawing near here cannot be meant any motion of our Body towards *GOD*; For as to His Glorious and Majestick presence in the Heavens, we cannot approach it though

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we would, and as for His other essential presence, neither can we avoide it though we would too, for He fills both Heaven and Earth. *Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence.* (saith *David*) *If I ascend up into Heaven, thou art there: If I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.* Psal. 139. 7. 8. To draw near GOD, therefore is a metaphorical speech, and must be understood not of any natural action of the Body, but of some moral action of the Soul, *viz.* The desires and endeavours after Peace and Reconciliation with GOD. For, because these who are Enemies and at Variance together, use to keep a distance and shun each others Company; therefore in Scripture they who take no thought of GOD, are altogether careless to Please, and who do what offends him, are said to be *far from GOD*, and to *go a whoring from Him*: And on the other hand, because these who lay aside their enmity, and are desirous to be made freinds usually meet and resort one anothers Company, therefore *drawing near to GOD* in the Scripture language is put for the inclination of our Souls toward Him, the seeking to have all manner of enmitie betwixt GOD and us quite removed, and that a true firm Peace be made up with Him.

Sin is the cause and occasion of that enmity which is fallen out betwixt GOD and Man: And one would have thought that all the difficulties

ficulties of Reconciliation with GOD, should have been on his part; That his Justice, his Honour, his Authority should have interposed, and not only not suffered him to accept of Peace, but also to have oblidged him utterly to destroy these despicable sillie Creatures, who had the foolish insolency to rebel against him, and to counteract his Will and Pleasure. But behold *Jesus Christ*, hath removed all difficulties on GODS part, he hath found out means to satisfie the Justice and to salve the Honour and Authority of GOD, though Man be not destroyed, though his sin be passed over and Pardoned; GODS wrath is pacified; he now looks favourablie upon Man, and is willing to receive him into favour, and to renew a Covenant of Grace and Peace with him, whereby he obligeth himself to deal with Man as if he had not sinned, as if he had never rebelled against his Maker. Now would it been expected that such a gracious offer would not been readily embraced, but which is unaccountable Man stands out, and will not be reconciled to GOD. GOD hath made great condescendence, and Man will make none; GOD woes and intreates, and Man drawes back and runs away; GOD calls and sends message after message, and the other will not hear, he stretcheth forth his hands, but no Man regardeth; He waits but they will not come or draw near. Thus each

each act's as t'were not his own part, but what in all appearance doth more properly belong to the other: GOD act's as if he were in Mans stead, and Man behaves as if he were in the place of GOD; For as if GOD were the poor, the needie, the inferiour, and miserable party, he sues and humbles himself first, and as if Man were an independent Soveraign and All-sufficient Beeing, who needed no aid from any, he rejects all the treaty, and disdains this proffered friendship. O! Wonderful condescension of GOD? And O the stupidity and foolishness and madness of Man? What words are sufficient to hold out either of these? And how hard is it to determine which of the two is most astonishing? Whither GODS behaviour towards Man in seeking him, offering Pardon and Peace, or Mans behaviour towards GOD, in refusing and slighting the same? *Do ye thus requite the LORD, O foolish People and unwise? O ye sons of Men, how long will ye turn my Glory into shame? how long will ye love vanity, and seek after leesing!* Do ye slight GOD, set at nought your Maker, and court the world? are ye taken up with toyes and trifles, and will ye despise life, and cast behind you eternal bliss. *Be astonished, O ye Heavens at this! and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate saith the LORD, for my People have committed two great evils; They have forsaken Me the fountain of living waters, and hew'd them*

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no Cisterns, broken Cisterns that can hold no Water, Jer. 2. 12. 13. O, that Men were wise, O that they did understand, O that they would but seriously consider this?

Come I pray you, let us reason together, call in your thoughts, consult your knowledge, advise with your experience, and then tell me what you have ever found preferable to GOD? Is there any thing more worthie your thoughts or care: What is it that doth equal His Favour and Love; Or, what can compensate the loss thereof? Will Riches, will Honours, will Pleasures, or will any thing else be profitable as GOD! Can we expect to draw from them either separatly or jointly as much Comfort and Satisfaction as from Him? Behold every day lets us see that all these things are frail, brittle and uncertain; and that there can be no fast hold of them: But though they were more certain and stable, yet being unsuitable to the Nature of our Soul's, 'tis impossible to draw from them alone that good which our Souls crave. It is indeed somewhat hard to convince Men, but though they would act over all the experiments of *Solomon*, and prove what good is under the Sun, they could not draw another conclusion then what he has left us, *viz. Thus all things are vanity and vexation of Spirit*, and that Mans chief & only good is to seek GOD, and to delight themselves in Him: *The Lord is my portion, saith my soul, therefore will I hope in him*; Lam. 3. 24.

O consider what a Honour it is to be admitted into favour and fellowship with GOD. The *Psalmist* falls into admiration when he beheld Man but a *little lower then the Angels*, and invested with *Dominion over the Fowles of the Air, the Beasts of the Field, and the Fish of the Sea*, *Psal.* 8. And whatever reason there be for praise and admiration in that case, yet *Angels* being but fellow Creatures, and the other destitute of reason and understanding, and so far below us, this is nothing so considerable as to be advanc'd into *Communion with God* himself, this is indeed a hight and dignity which may both amaze the beholders and these on whom it is conferred. *O anima rationalis miserabilis creatura, quo te dejicis. terram diligis, & melior es, cælum contemplaris & altior es, solo tuo creatore tu inferior*, saith St. *August*: To be made the friends of GOD, is truly a Honour to our Nature, nothing else can give any lustre or glory to us, but this is the highest can be aspir'd to, either by Angels or Men, and therefore we have great reason to cry out, *LORD, what is Man, that thou shouldest be so kind to him?* And so kind too after he had turn'd Rebel and Traitor is indeed beyond Expression. *Behold what manner of love the father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called the sons of GOD*, 1 *Joh.* 3. 1. *Constantine* had good reason to say, that he gloried more in being a member of the Church, then in being head of the Empyre, for to be a true lively Member of

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the Church doth unite us to GOD, and so is more to be desired then the greatest Dominion, or an universal Monarchy. For hereby we are not only highly Honoured, but greatly Enriched; We have not only a Honourable Tittle and Relation conferred on us, but also the largest emolument. *Eliphaz* advised *Job* to seek unto GOD, that he might be relieved out of all his trouble, and if he got him his friend, he told him he should be *in League with the stones of the Field, and the beasts of the Feild should be at peace with him*; For GOD will certainly oblidge all his Creatures to keep peace with these with whom he is in peace, as a King maketh peace not only for himself, but for all his People, or if he let any of them break Peace, it is that he may make these his beloved and peculiar friends to be the more glorious by gaining a victory over them. He that draws near to GOD is sure of His Hearts wish; *Delight thy self in the LORD, and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart*, *Psal.* 37. 4. What can any wish for more, then what an infinite wisdom can contrive, an infinite power act, and an infinite bounty bestow? Now he who hath GOD his friend, is allyed to infinite Power, Wisdome, Goodness, which will ever interess themselves in all his concerns. *Happie are the People whose GOD is the LORD; Blessed is the Man who chuses GOD for his Inheritance, for He will give grace and Glory and will with-hold no good thing from him.*

All things shall work together to the good of them that love GOD: Trouble as well as prosperity, and the saddest affliction as well as the greatest outward plenty. *Many say, who will shew us any good?* but saith *David*, *LORD lift thou up the light of thy Countenance upon us. Thou hast put gladness in my heart more then in the time that their Corne and Wine increased*, Psal. 1, 6. They who draw near GOD have joy which the World cannot rob them off, the ground of their happiness and comfort is not lyable to rapine or violence, nor doth it ever decay. *Peace I leave with you, my Peace I give unto you*, saith *Christ*, *but not as the World giveth give I unto you*, that is, he gives neither so inconsiderable, nor yet so brittle & uncertain a Peace as what the World gives, but what is more solide and substantial, wherefore he addes, *let not your hearts be troubled neither be afraid.* If we have Peace with *GOD* through Christ we need not startle at any thing, neither at private Personal disasters, nor at publick calamities: *because GOD is our refuge and present help.* The Children of GOD cannot be without crosses and afflictions; But GOD will not suffer these to Marre either their present inward comfort, or after happiness, their joy cannot be taken from them, He will let them be tossed up and down with the waves of trouble, but they shall not be swallowed up, they shall have a Joyfull exit. *Mark the Perfect and behold the*

Upright

Upright, for the latter end of that Man is Peace, *Psal.* 37. When Men draw near the end of their life, when their dayes are near a Period, whither through age or by any accident, they have need of some comforting cordial to keep them from fainting, and nothing is possible to administer this, but the hopes of *Peace with God*. The sense of *God*'s Favour and Love will make *Death* appear with a goodly visage, though generally it is esteemed the *King of Terrours*; this will make one so far from abhorring Death, as to be even glade of it, because it opens a door to Eternall rest, unspeakable Joy, and fullness of Glory. Is it not then good for us to draw near to GOD?

But if so much real good, as thus accrues by drawing near GOD, be not motive enough to engage us to do it, I pray consider the danger of neglecting it, which is no less then utter Misery and certain Destruction, for *lo they that are far from thee shall perish*, (saith the *Psalmist*) *thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee*. Psal. 73. 27. It may certainly be matter of astonishment, how Men can rest, be merry, or enjoy any quietness while they live in enmity with GOD, and have no assurance of Peace with him. Men are troubled if they understand any alteration of their Kings Favour toward them, nay if but some difference fall out between them, and some Favourite of the Court, though the King's anger may be many wayes avoided,

and that before the Sun hath finished his course twice, the Favourite may be turned out of Court, and put in a condition which obliges him as much to depend on others, as others now on him: But however, is the wrath of frail mortal Man so much to be feared? is their displeasure so carefully to be avoided? and should the Wrath of GOD be little regarded? how much more reason have we to fear GOD then Man? there is no concealing ones self if he search out, nor is there any resisting his power, if he be resolved to punish, and *who may stand before him if his anger be kindled but a little.* Ye who will not be perswaded to draw *near GOD*, how think ye to save your selves, *how can ye escape if ye neglect so great Salvation* as is now tendered you? Can you muster Forces equal in strength & number unto GOD's? and if you cannot, why do you not seek Peace, before He come in wrath to revenge Himself, for the affront you have done Him in rejecting so great Love and Kindness, as He hath proffered by His own Son? Ye *Atheists* and profane who now laugh at Religion and make a mock at Sin, what will ye do or say for your selves when GOD enters into Judgement with you? Do you think to put on then your present Boldness, and unmannerly Impudence? or that ye will make GOD retire by your Profane drolling and jesting, as you use now to fear all sober

and

and modest Persons from your company? Then your tongues will be bound up, your wits will fail, *shame shall cover your faces, you shall stand trembling, and shall feel that power to your confusion which at present you scorn and little regard.* Ye who cannot find time to seek GOD, who have no leasure to Pray, to read the Scripture, or to attend GOD'S publick Worship or Ordinances, how do ye think to come off? will ye say that ye had your Business to wait on, that ye were taken up with the pursuite of Honours and Riches, that ye were drawn away with Pleasures, with Gaming and Sporting? That is, to tell Him plainly, you loved Him not, you preferr'd all things before Him, and thought it time enough to seek Him when you had nothing else to do. Or, do you imagine to bribe Him, but He will not be brib'd; and though He could, what would you give, you have nothing, you leave all behind you, you pass naked into the other World: There is no Remedy then, but submit you must, and you can expect no Mercy for it is out of time, and when it was offer'd, you contemn'd it. *O consider this ye that forget GOD, lest he tear you in pieces, when there shall be none to deliver!* Now is the acceptable time, now is the day of Salvation, now you may have Peace, be wise therefore, and let not such opportunities slip, but *seek the Lord while He may be found, and call upon Him while He is*

near

near. Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you, cleanse your hands ye Sinners, and purifie your hearts ye double minded.

I have now spoken to the Exhortation, and proposed what may make it take effect, and I hope you are thereby moved to draw near to GOD. It follows next, that we consider the manner how we should draw near, for this we should also look to, otherwayes we will be disappointed of *Peace with God.* He is ready & willing to accept of any who come aright as they ought, *He that cometh to me I will in no wayes cast out.* Joh. 6.37. But yet every drawing near will not find acceptance, some come and are rejected, not for the want of good will on Gods part, but for the want of these Qualities and Conditions on their own, which are necessary and requisite to recommend them to the Favour of GOD. Now what these are the Apostle shews you here. The first is, *a true Heart.* The Heart is not made mention of, with a design to exclude the Body, for that is also required as appears by what follows: But because GOD is *a Spirit who searcheth the Heart and trieth the Reins*, who knoweth the inward Thoughts of Man, the inward Temper and Disposition of their Minds, and with what designs and affections they present themselves before Him, therefore the Heart is in the first place mentioned, that Men may not presume to mock GOD by outward Fawnings and Caresses

Careſſes, whiles in their Hearts they have no true Kindneſs for Him, nor ſincere Love to Him. GOD will not value the Bowings and Proſtrations of Mens Bodies, their ſad Looks, mournful Tone, fair Words and Profeſſions, if theſe proceed not from the Heart, and be not the real intimations of the inward purpoſes and affections of their Soul: But if in the middſt of theſe, they retain any ſecret averſion to GOD, his will, or his wayes, or if there lurks with them ſome Love and Inclination to what offends Him, then He will abhor them and all their Offers and Services. *This People draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and Honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me, therefore* ſaith GOD, *in vain do they worſhip Me, Math.* 15 8 There is no true Friendſhip where there is not an Union and cloſing of hearts; Indeed ſometimes Enemies will meet, ſhake hands, and make many fair proteſtations, and yet their old Grudge and Quarel will continue, which cannot be reckoned a cordial reconciliation, it's only a patcht agreement to pleaſe ſome third Perſon, or to ſhun ſome preſent inconvenience, which will never laſt. But as there is nothing to oblidge GOD to patch up a Peace with us, againſt His Will or contrary to His Honour; ſo there is no Peace with him who is the Father of Spirits, but when it is with the Heart, neither will He look favourably upon any heart,

heart, except a true heart, that is a sincere heart, free of hypocrisie and deceit, he who drawes neat to GOD must be be like *Nathaniel a true Israelite in whom there is no guile*, that is, who sincerely and in good earnest Love and Desires that which he professeth, and pretends to seek. One Man may deceive another, he may make him believe what is not in his minde, for the East is not more distant from the West, then sometimes the heart of Man is from his mouth, his intention and affection from his words and actions. But be not deceived, GOD will not be mocked, there is no deluding of him into a belief of what is not really true, he knows well enough whither we be ingenious, and if ingenuity be wanting, he will have nothing to do with us. As false deceitful friends are more odious than profess'd Enemies, so GOD hates hypocrites as much nay more, then profane persons; For in Scripture the portion of Hypocrites is mentioned as the dreadfullest Punishment, *they shall have their portion with Hypocrites*, as if that were the very hight of miserie. If then ye draw near to GOD, see that it be with true hearts, for *He desires truth in the inward parts*. Now what one seeks sincerely and in good earnest, he values and prizeth highly, he will spare nothing within his power to the obtaining it, and will labour to remove whatever may obstruct it: thus he who sincerely seeks & desires

desires health, will be at any cost or pains for it, will cautiously guard against that dyet, and weather, places, or what else may prejudge it. And he who is covetous reckons little of the greatest toyl & drudgery if gainful, nothing is lordid to him which brings profit, & he avoids & hates all actions & places which call him to lay out money; the like may be said of other things. And hereby we may know whither we seek GOD with a true heart: Do we in our hearts love GOD, and value Him aright, that is, above all things? Can we prize *God* as a chief treasure, and count all things else in comparison *as but loss and dung*? Are we ready to part with any thing rather than lose Him or his favour! Do we hate whatever offends Him, and is inconsistent with fellowship with Him? Can we freely embrace his will, His wayes, His word, which are inseparable from Him? In a word, do we love what He loves, and hate what He hates, and are his thoughts our thoughts? If so, then our hearts are true to *GOD*, but otherwise they are not right, they are not according to GODS Heart, and while they continue so, no Peace and Reconciliation can be expected. Many draw near to GOD, as the Children of *Israel* came out of *Ægypt*, they came forth with their Bodies, but they left their hearts behind them; and, though they were necessitated to move forwards, yet it was still with reluctancy, and

they

they would fain have return'd to the Onions & Fleſh potts of *Egypt*; ſo many draw near to GOD but not cordially, 'tis ſomewhat unwillingly, for they would be content to be freed of the neceſſity of ſeeking GOD; and in the midſt of their Religious Services they remember the Pleaſures of Sin with ſome Delight, they caſt favourable glances upon them, and wiſh for a freedom to enjoy them. GOD knows this, and do you think He will be pleaſed? will He accept of ſuch perſons? No certainly, the fate of theſe *Iſraelites* tells us their Doom, for as theſe whoſe Hearts were ſo glewed to *Egypt*, and who in their Heart deſpiſed *Canaan*, were never ſuffered to enter it, or to taſte the Pleaſures thereof: ſo *Hypocrites*, ſuch as do not willingly and cordially draw near GOD, ſhall never find Grace in His ſight, they ſhall never be admitted into the Holieſt of Holieſt, but ſhall be for ever thruſt out.

The ſecond thing required in thoſe who draw near to GOD, is, That they approach *in full aſſurance of Faith.* In the Original it is. πληροφορία πίστεως. which *Phraſe* is Metaphorical alluding to the Practice of *Mariners*, who when they are bounding towards any port, uſe ſo to order their Sails that the wind may extend and fill them, to the end they may have a pleaſant and ſpeedy paſſage, for when the Sails flap and are not filled with the wind, the Ship neither makes ſpeed nor keeps an even

courſe

courſe. Now ſeing it is Faith which brings us to GOD, and makes our Union with Him; for *without Faith it is impoſible to pleaſe GOD; for he that cometh to Him muſt believe that He is, and that He is a Rewarder of thoſe who diligently ſeek Him*, as the ſame Apoſtle tells us hereafter *Chap.* 11. 6. and in the 3*d.* of this Epiſtle he plainly declares that to have *an evil heart of unbelief*, is *to depart from the living GOD*, and that *ſome could not enter into GODS reſt becauſe of unbelief*: Now I ſay, ſeing it is ſo, ſeing Faith is thus neceſſary to lead us to GOD, therefore in the Text 'tis required that we be *full of Faith*, that we let Faith actuat all the Powers and Faculties of our Souls, and enliven all our Actions, that like a Ship whoſe Sails are full blown, we may hold a ſteady and pleaſant Courſe, and at laſt obtain a ſafe and happy Arrival at that high and holy port whither we would be at: *We are juſtified by Faith, and have Peace with GOD through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* Rom. 5. 1.

If you would know particularly what this Faith is, it comprehends two things. 1*ſt.* A Belief of the Myſteries of the Goſpel. 2*ly*, A Belief of our acceptance with GOD. Firſt, Our Faith muſt reſpect the Myſteries of the Goſpel, theſe we are to look upon as certain and undoubted Truths; and that they are ſo, might be eaſily made out. If I were ſpeaking to *Infidels*, I could clearly ſhew that the Goſpel

is no Humane Device, *no cunningly devised Fable*, but a thing most sure and faithful as it is worthy of all acception, it being every way agreeable to the Nature and Majesty of GOD, and having clear Prophesies going before, and manifold undoubted Miracles following after, to testifie that it is from GOD: But seeing my Auditory is *Christian*, there is no need of proving what they already profess to believe, at least such a discourse would not be pertinent at this time: But we ought not to consider the Mysteries of the Gospel as Truths only, but as Truths of the greatest importance and concernment, *Great* (saith the Apostle) *is the Mystery of Godliness*, 'tis not only true, but a great weighty Truth, in which the Wisdom, the Power and all the Attributes of GOD are contained, and which shews to Sinners the way how they should recover themselves, and be saved from the Wrath that is to come. *This is life eternal to know Thee, the only true GOD, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.* John, 17. 3. Wherefore if we believe this, our thoughts should be much taken up therewith, we should frequently contemplate these Mysteries, and be over joyed with the contemplation of them. I believe the Wars of *Julius Cæsar*, the discoveries of the *Indies*, these Transactions of Forreign Princes reported in our *Gazets* and *News Letters*, and many other things, but I think it not worth the while to ruminat much on

these

these things, I do not make it my Business to consider them, and to talk of them, because I do not look upon them as matters of such moment in themselves, or of such concernment to Me: But beleiving the truth of the Gospel, and knowing the importance of what is revealed therein, I find it my duty to esteem it as my necessary Food, and that it is as proper and necessary to refresh my Soul with serious and dayly meditations thereof, as to give my Body these repasts which Nature dayly calls for; This made our Apostle *desire to know nothing save Jesus Christ and him crucified*, & to say *doubtless I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ*, Phil. 3. 8. And as such a Faith is required in all the Mysteries of the Gospel, so more particularly in the Mysterie of the Cross, the Death and sufferings of Jesus Christ, and that satisfaction he has made thereby for Sin: These we should have an Eye to in all our addresses to GOD, and more especially such solemn addresses as these we are now to make. For he who believes himselves thereon, and by vertue thereof draws near to *GOD*, does confess himself a great Sinner, that it had been just for GOD to have damned him eternally, that its only for the sake of Christ he is saved, and that the Wisdom and Mercy

of GOD is highly to be magnified, in finding out such excellent means and methods for the Salvation of Man, and by such acknowledgments the greatest Sinner endears himself to GOD, and conciliats His Favour and Kindness: But he who denyes this, or has no respect thereto when he draws near to GOD, must either not own himself a Sinner, or not think it necessary to satisfie GODS Justice, or to repair His Honour which is provoked and affronted by Sin, or he must not believe that Jesus Christ hath done this for us, and that He is the only Mediator betwixt GOD and Man, but must fancy he can come to *GOD* by himself, or through some other besides Christ, and which soever of these perswasions he has, he is so far from finding acceptance, that he at once both exasperates *GOD*, and provoketh him who had undertaken to make his Peace, and who only could do it; *I am the way, the truth and the life, no man cometh to the Father but by Me*, Jo. 14 6. 8. therefore its said, *He that believeth on him is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of GOD*, Chap. 4. 18.

Secondly, I told you the Faith here required must have a respect to our acceptance with GOD, that is, we must be firmely perswaded of GODS Mercy, of His good will to save Sinners, and that we our selves in particular

shall

shall find grace in His sight, if we approach as we ought, &c. 'twould seem the *Translators* of our *Bible* have chiefly respected this act of Faith in the translation of this Text. Christ required of all these who came to Him to be cured of their bodily distempers, Faith both in His Power and good-will. And St. *Matthew* tell's us *He did no mighty works in his own country, because of their unbelief*, Chap 13. 58. St. *Mark* saith further, *that he could not do it*, Chap 6. Which we are not so to understand, as if our LORDS Power could be restrained by any, or that He depended upon Men for the exercise thereof, but only that the want of this Faith rendred these Men unworthy of His Benefites, and indisposed them for receiving them. And as these Temporal and Bodyly Benefites were not ordinarly conferred without this precious Faith, so neither will Spiritual and Temporal Blessings, as Mercy and Salvation, be granted except to these who are disposed for them by earnest desyres, and a sincere belief of *GODS* being ready and willing to bestow them, or at least if they be given to any other, 'tis not according to these ordinary Rules and Methods of the dispensation of grace which we ought to walk by; For this Faith is alwayes required as a necessary condition, *all things whatsoever ye shall ask in Prayer, believing, ye shall receive*, saith Christ, *Matth.* 21. 22. And St. *James* saith, *Let not*

that Man, who wanteth Faith, think that he shall receive any thing of the LORD, J. 7. This Faith is requisite both to animate our endeavours after the means of Grace and Salvation, and also to excite *GODS* love, and to encline him to be Merciful to us. 'Tis Natural to love these who put confidence in us, and he has no spark of generosity who will not do his outmost for these who altogether relye on him; if a Sinner can confide in *GOD* notwithstanding that he hath offended Him, if he throw himself at His Feet, and can but believe that *GOD* has so much Mercy as to forgive him, and upon his repentance to receive him into Favour for the sake of Christ; He by this act so Honoureth *GOD*, and so tyeth Him to his Interest, that he will not, he cannot abandone Him. This is set forth to us in the Parable of the Prodigal, for when the *penitent son was yet a great way off, his Father saw him, and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him Luke*, 15. 20 And as this Faith enclines *GOD* to Mercy, so it animates our endeavours, it excites and quickens us to a cheerfull performance of all the Means and Conditions of Salvation. The Husbandman Soweth when he has Hope, and the Merchant Tradeth when he has Hope of gain, and every Man plyeth heartily what he believes will succeed: but Men are discouraged and made to give over their endea-

vours

vours, when they take up a Perſwaſion that they ſhall but labour in vain. *A double minded Man* (ſaith St. *James*) that is one who hangs in ſuſpence, who is toſſed with doubts and fears, *he is unſtable in all his wayes.* 1. 8. Such an one is inconſtant, he purſues not his enterprizes, but deſiſts; *he is not ſteadfaſt and unmoveable, and alwayes abounding in the work of the Lord*, as every one ought to be, and as he will be who knows and believes that *his labour is not in vain.* When therefore we draw near to GOD, let us do it in this full aſſurance of faith, that we may do it heartily ſo as to pleaſe GOD; let us not entertain doubts and fears which but diſquiet our own Minds, and caſt diſhonour upon GOD. Would not a Servant reflect either upon the ability or honeſty of his Maſter, if he queſtioned his reward for the ſincere performance of his Service? if ye who are evil and ſinful, think your ſelves oblig'd to love and be faithful to, theſe who ſeek to pleaſe you, will not GOD think you be more faithful and juſt to forgive us, and to receive us into His favour if we aprove our ſelves unto Him? Is there any thing ſuter than His word? Are not *all His promiſes Yea and Amen*? Why art thou perplext? Why art thou caſt down ô my Soul? Wouldſt thou be reading thy deſtiny in the hidden Books of Fate? Wouldſt thou fain know what theſe ſecret decrees lay of thee? O fooliſh Soul?

Why ſo curious to know things too high for thee, which are hid from thee, and therefore hid becauſe the knowledge of them is of no uſe to thee, nor would it give thee any ſatisfaction? Whatever be the ſecret decrees, they do not, they cannot contradict theſe Eternal and Immutable purpoſes which are revealed, *viz.* That they who repent and believe and obey the Goſpel ſhall be ſaved, this ſentence cannot be reverſed. Believeſt thou this, if you believe, do accordingly, and there is no cauſe of fear, whatever come of others, you are ſurely *predeſtinated to eternal life.* If thou canſt believe, all things are poſſible, *Bleſſed are they who believe, for there ſhall be a performance of theſe things which are told them of the Lord.* Some are not contented with this Aſſurance, that *GOD* has certainly declared His infallible purpoſe of accepting returning Sinners, but they would be aſſured that they themſelves are actually accepted and juſtified, which I confeſs would be a great comfort, neither do I doubt but that it may be had, and that many have it: But it is a moſt prepoſterous thing to look for it, as ſome do, before we draw near to GOD, or in the very beginnings of our converſion, this were to ask Fruit before the due time, as if one ſhould ſeek Fruit on the Tree he hath but newly planted. This aſſurance goes not before our Juſtification and Peace with GOD, but followeth after, and therefore we ought

only

only to look after this, when we have evidently performed the conditions here required. If thy assurance be built on another foundation, 'tis not to be trusted to; and if thou knowest that this foundation is laid, if thou canst say that in all sincerity thou hast done what was sought of thee, what makes thee not to be assured? All doubts of our Salvation should only arise from our fullfilling our part, and if these doubts be removed, there can remain none on *GODS* Part. But to proceed,

The third qualification here, is that we have *our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience*, which with what followes is the inseparable effect of the two former, they cannot be first, and the other cannot be without them; We must have *true hearts and faith*, before we can be *sprinkled from an evil conscience*, or *have our bodyes washen*, but once having this, the other will follow, for light and heat may be as well disjoyned from the Sun, as purity of heart and holyness of Life from true Faith and a sincere Mind to *GOD*. Many pretend Faith, but *the tree is known by its fruit*, hereby may it be known whither thy Faith be good, if so be thy *heart be sprinkled from an evil conscience*. In this speech the Apostle alludes to the Rites and Ceremonies under the Law, 'twas the custome then to sprinkle both the Priests and the People in their Solemn approaches to the *LORD*, sometimes with Blood, sometimes with

Water, Oyl or Ashes: But now these Legal Ceremonies are laid aside, yet the thing signified by them is still required, *viz.* What the Apostle makes mention of here, that our *hearts be sprinkled from an evil conscience.* By *the heart* is meant the Soul or inner Man, by the *evil conscience*, these things which pollute the Soul, which keep one from having a *good conscience void of offence towards GOD and Man*, such as brutish lusts, inordinate desires, unworthy passions, evil thoughts and sinful inclinations whither born with us, or contracted afterwards. All these must be mortified and purged out, before we can be throughly reconciled to *GOD*; For as *Jehu* said to *Joram*, when he askt, *is there Peace? what peace, so long as the whoredoms of thy Mother Jezabel, & witcherafts are so many!* so I say to these who draw near to *GOD*, how can they look for Peace from him, while their Pryde, vain Glory, Malice, Wrath, Covetousness, and other filthy and ungodly lusts, live and reigne in them? *GOD* is willing to be reconciled to our persons, but not to our Sins; We must part with them, or if our Sins and we cannot be separat we must give up fellowship with *GOD*. *Truly GOD is good to Israel*, but 'tis to such only *as are clean in heart*, *Psal.* 73. 1. He cannot love foul polluted Soules, He cannot chuse but loath and hate them, for *he is not a GOD that hath Pleasure in Wickedness, neither shall evil dwell*

dwell with him, Psa. 5. 4. As therefore when we entertain great Persons, we use to remove all things nastie and unhandsome, and whatsoever may readily offend them, or shame our selves and are careful to have all things about us decent and fashionable; so being to approach the holy presence of *GOD*, let us lay aside every thing offensive and unsuitable, *viz.* the love and inclination to every Sin, for *he is of purer eyes then that he can behold iniquity*, he naturaly abhores it; And let us give all diligence to adorne our Souls with holy thoughts, and Heavenly dispositions, for *the Righteous LORD loveth Righteousnes, His countenance doth behold the upright*, Psa. 11. 7. But if this be wanting, we can have no acceptance. *If I regard iniquity in my heart the LORD will not hear me* (saith *David*) Psal. 66. 18. Even *David* shall be rejected if he regard iniquity. Some will say, if the case be thus, none can have hopes, for who can say their heart is clean? 'Tis true in our present state, our hearts cannot be so clean as to have no blemish, there will be ever some remainders of sin in us, & now, & then perhaps some sinful motions will arise in the best; but this will not be imputed to us, neither hinder our reconciliation with *GOD* unless we regard them with love and delight, cherish and follow them. If we look on these irruptions of our corrupt Nature with sorrow and regreat, if we take care to prevent and suppress them, and are

filled with grief when they at any time prevaile, GOD will not condemn us. They are innocent and clean according to the Gospel, who inwardly hate and loath Sin, and keep a continual Warre with it, and who love holyneſs, and constantly aime and endeavour after it, and he who is so clean inwardly will give an outward manifestation; And therefore it is added, that we have,

In the last place, our *Bodies washed with pure water*, the former clause as we have seen referred to the inner-Man, and this relates to the outward Man, for both must be made clean in the sight of GOD: We must *cleanse our selves from all filthineſs both of the flesh and spirit*, neither of them singly will do well: GOD has united Spirit and Flesh together to make up one person, and therefore what GOD hath thus joyned together ought not to be put asunder. Our Minds and Spirits must ascend to GOD, but the body must not be left behind wallowing in the mire and filth of Sin and Uncleanneſs, else the other will not speed, they will not get access unto GOD. We ought *to glorifie GOD both in Soul and Body, for both are His*; therefore as under the Law Men were tyed to frequent washing of their Body, that they might be legally clean, and fit to enter the Temple, or approach the Altar, from which they were debarred, if they had any corporal filthineſs upon them, or had touched

ed any unclean thing, so in allusion to this, the Apostle here exhorts us to purifie our Life & actions, to Sanctify our outward conversation in the World, by breaking off the course of sin, and conforming our words and actions to the word of GOD, for that is like *pure water* to cleanse us from all Spiritual filthiness. *By what means* (saith *David*) *shall a young man cleanse his way, by taking heed thereto according to thy word.* Psal. 119. 9. Now until we be thus cleansed both inwardly and outwardly, we are not fit to draw near GOD, nor throughly disposed for reconciliation with him, *without holiness* (saith our Apostle) *no Man can see God.* There must be both outward and inward holiness to render us worthy of peace with *GOD*, we must be endued with holy minds, and the beauty of holiness must appear in our lives and conversations; and if the outward Man have not a holy Face and Countenance, the inward Man is much to be suspected: Scabs and Ulcers in the Skin, betoken corrupt and impure blood in the veins. 'Tis great hypocrisy to pretend change of heart, when there is no change of life, for persons to say they are regenerate within, when no reformation appears without. When *Saul* pretended a performance of the command which the *Lord* gave against *Amaleke*, *Samul* said to him, *what meaneth then this bleating of the Sheep, and the lowing of the Oxen which I hear?* for that was an evidence against him,

So I would ask these who say their heart is right, they have a good Conscience towards GOD, and yet walk in sin, what means their evil speeches, their Curling and Swearing, their reviling, and backbiting, their obscene talk, and immodest behaviour, revellings and Drunkenness, Injustice and Dishonst dealing, Cruelty and doing Injury to others, and the like Crimes? For doth not our Saviour tell, that these proceed from the heart. He whose heart is Perfect and Upright with GOD is always carful to do that which is good in his sight. 'Tis true the beginnings of conversion to GOD, doth not always visibly appear, as the recovery of the Body from sickness is not at the first discernable to others; But in process of time a sincere conversion will certainly manifest it self in the Life and Actions. *The path of the just is as the shining light, which shines more and more unto the perfect day.*

Men and Brethren, Sin was the cause why we were cast out of GODS Favour, and there is a necessity of laying aside Sin before we can recover it. Indeed Christ dyed to take away the guilt of sin, but he has not taken away the Intrinsick Evil of it, that remains still; He by his Death, has made sin pardonable but not allowable; and therefore we must not continue the Servants of Sin, we must quite a vain and wicked conversation, turn every

every one from his iniquity, dye to Sin and live to *GOD*, and yeild our selves to be instruments of Righteousness according to his will and Pleasure, and then we shall please Him, and he will greatly love us. *Wash ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings before mine eyes, cease to do evil, learn to do well, seek judgement, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the Widdow, and then come,* (saith the LORD) *though your Sins be as Scarlet, they shall be as white as Snow, though red like Crimson, they shall be as Wool, Isa.* 1. 16. &c.

Thus we have explained the conditions of obtaining reconciliation with GOD, and if you please to make reflections on them, you will find them most just and reasonable, and easie as can be required. GOD could not pass this without reversing the order of Nature, and laying aside his Holiness and Honour which was impossible; nor could any terms be more proper for Man, nor better accomodated to the state and condition of all: If many expensive Sacrifices, rich Gifts, or sums of Money had been required, what would become of the poor, who make the greatest part of the Word? But now neither the Rich are received upon the account of their Riches, nor the poor rejected for their poverty: But both the one and the other are accepted according to their Faith, Repentence, and Obedience. There are some who will not allow us this priviledge

viledge, they damn all *Protestants* whatever they believe or practise: But as the *Italian* Proverb is, *Better be condemned by ten Physicians, than one Judge*: So it is certain, better to be condemned by any number or quality of Men, then to be condemn'd by the word of GOD; the word of GOD you see condemns none who has the qualifications in the Text, but encourages them to draw near to GOD, and gives them assurance of acceptance. If then through the Grace of GOD, we come to be so qualified, we need not fear, we are more sure of our Salvation, than if we had the *Popes Bull* for it, a thousand *Indulgences*, ten thousand *Masses* daily sung for us, and all the *Church treasure of Merits* bestowed on us: And if we lack this, that will not, cannot be compensated with *Pilgrimages*, *Processions*, *Pennances*, *Bowings*, *Prostrations before Altars*, *Crossings* and *Sprinklings* with *Holy Water*, nor yet the *Absolution of Priests*, for as our Apostle saith, *Bodily Exercises profit little* as to Salvation, and by what hath been said, you may understand, that the Religion which recommends us to GOD, must be somewhat more Spiritual than what these amounts to, but to leave this and come to an Application.

This Text in both parts may be accomodated to the Sacrament of the *Lords Supper*: These words, *Let us draw near*, may be without stretching applyed to our coming to this Ordinance

dinance, for this is one way of drawing near GOD, and the moſt ſolemn we can make in this Life, and an earneſt of that intimate admiſſion into his glorious preſence hereafter, and hereby alſo is ſet forth that which procur'd us this gracious priviledge, *viz.* The Death and Sufferings of *Jeſus Chriſt*. Wherefore who deſire to draw near GOD, who would have the comfort of his Favour, and the hopes of everlaſting Glory, ſhould embrace readily and chearfully the occaſion of the Sacrament. And to ſpeak freely to you, I know nothing can keep People from this *Sacrament*, and make them ſlight it, but the want of *true deſire after God*, and little thought of our Eternal Salvation. I pray GOD forgive theſe who have made ſome believe it a marke of Religion, or greater Sanctity to withdraw themſelves from our Communion. I intreat you be not eaſily deceived, believe not every Spirit, but examine well what you hear, whither it be agreeable to Truth. None that knows the Truth, or loves the Purity of the Goſpel, can joyn in Communion with the *Church of Rome*, but I appeal to all your Conſciences, if there be any Doctrine taught in this Church, or any thing practiſed in our Worſhip, diſagreeable to the Word of GOD; And if there be not, why ſhould perſons withdraw from our Communion? And what can excuſe ſuch withdrawing? Theſe Tables

are

are indeed too seldome covered; but when they are covered, let them be filled with Guests; and if they be not, what a shame is it? Let not this poor Church be miserably torne with needless & unwarrantable separations, whereby we become both a prey and a laughing stock to our Enemies. *How comely a thing is it* (saith the *Psalmist*) *for Brethren to dwell together in Unity*, and it is as Profitable as Comely. Are the Times bad? We should meet to Pray GOD to make them better: Is this a wicked generation! That should not make us *forsake the assembling our selves together*, but we should the rather do it, *to provoke one another to love and good works*. Let not any pretend a liberty of doing what they please, & say they are not accountable to us whither they go or come: Consider I pray you, that we are all accountable to GOD, and are obliged to do what he commands, and not what is right in our own Eyes, or in the Eyes of others, let therefore his Laws be punctually observed, and his Ordinances waited on. And let none take to themselves a dispensation from any of these, least they incurr his displeasure, which of all things is most to be feared.

But though I wish all would come to this Sacrament, yet I would not have any to come unworthily and without due preparation, for St. *Paul* has told us the sad danger of that.

Now

Now what is required to render one worthy, you may learn from the Text, he hath *the Wedding Garment* who hath the Qualifications in the Text. Let me therefore beseech you, all to retire home, to lay aside the thoughts of other businesse, and in all seriousnes to examine how it stands between GOD and you; see whither you be already adorn'd with these Qualifications here spoken of; if you have them, rejoyce and bless *GOD*, and come up to Morrow to the House of *GOD*; and to this Sacrament, that they may be confirmed and perfected in you. If as yet ye are Strangers to these Qualifications, do not resolve to withdraw, for that is to continue in your sin, and so without *GOD*; but be ye rather more earnest this night in acquiring them; In so short a time 'tis true you cannot bring them to perfection, but you may have them in sincerity, which for the present will be admitted. O roule up your Faith, and let it operate in your mindes, besprinkle your selves with the *tears of true contrition*, and cleanse your selves with stedfast purposes of departing from all iniquity, and of keeping ever hereafter the *Commandments of GOD*, and if you do so, you shall go back justified in *GODS sight*.

AMEN.

FINIS.